S. SRINIVASA IYENGAR

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

LYTTON STRACHEY: A CRITICAL STUDY
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A HAND-BOOK OF INDIAN ADMINISTRATION
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S. Srinivasa Iyengar.

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(THE STORY OF A DECADE OF INDIAN POLITICS)

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IN MEMORY OF

SIR SANKARAN NAIR

Jurist, Patriot & Statesman

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CHAPTER I

TOWARDS LEADERSHIP

Mr. S. Srinivasa Iyengar comes of an ancient and opulent family in South India. His father, Seshadri Iyengar, was a respected land-owner in the Madura district. Srinivasa Iyengar was born on the 11th September, 1874. He had his education at the Madura College, Madura, and the Presidency and Law Colleges, Madras. He married a daughter of the late Sir V. Bashyam Iyengar, the greatest lawyer India has so far produced, and worked under him as an apprentice. Enrolled as a High Court Vakil in 1898, Srinivasa Iyengar rapidly rose in the profession. Not exactly a blue ribbon in his college career, but none the less one of the keenest brains of the twentieth century, Srinivasa Iyengar's phenomenal success in the profession was inevitable, though the prestige and heritage of Sir V. Bashyam Iyengar no doubt hastened it. Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar was fairly possessed by the daemon of intellect from the very outset of his career, and soon it became a mere matter of course that he should be briefed by one side or the other in all the exciting litigations in the presidency.

To the layman there is no more glamorous figure in the modern world than the successful lawyer. The lawyer's is a thrillingly combative profession. It engenders a challenging cocksureness, an almost fatal facility for doing many things at the same time. From the lawyer to the politician is a natural shift. From learning to identify oneself with one's clients to realizing one's identity with one's country or one's people,—it is a healthy transition. No wonder that, again and again, lawyers have played the most prominent part in the politics of nations. For a time, perhaps, the successful lawyer might feel satisfied with his rows of Law Reports and the piles of money he has been able to make. The adulation of his juniors and apprentices, the applause of the brothers in the profession, the approbation of the bench,—these satisfactions must pall in the end. Money-making, the elaborate confection of arguments, the

concoction of hair-splitting grounds of appeal, the scoring of a point over a worthy opponent,—are these to be the only distillations of one's intellectual energy and passional fervour? It is a dry field, all told; there should be other places where one could better justify one's existence and put to profitable use one's stern intellectual training and one's powers of advocacy. Thus it is that, at the very pinnacle of success in the profession of law, people like Asquith and Simon and F. E. Smith in England and Nehru and Das and Srinivasa Iyengar in India have in varied ways discovered the insufficiency of their profession and turned to a more unblemished service of their country.

Mr. S. Srinivasa Iyengar's star was on the ascendent on the legal firmament of Madras and presently reached the zenith. With Sir V. Bashyam Iyengar dead, Mr. V. Krishnaswami Iyer taken on the Executive Council, and Mr. Sundara Iyer elevated to the Bench, Mr. S. Srinivasa Iyengar had reached the very forefront, confident and supreme. In the accents of authority he addressed the Bar Association on Law and Law Reform, and issued the address as a pamphlet in 1907, equipped with several illuminating notes. That little brochure has almost become the *locus classicus* of discussions on Law Reform. The lesser lawyer is too liable to look upon Law as a static, dead mass of prohibitions and permissions. It is only the authentic lawyer—the successful practitioner, no less than critical student of law—that can pierce through the complexities of codified law and see them as mere links in the chain of ethical human endeavour. The evolution of law has had to run parallel with the evolution of human institutions and of social life; and when law fails to keep pace with progress, it becomes obsolete, futile, at times even dangerous. Yesterday's meat becomes today's poison. It is, therefore, the sacred duty of lawyers to play the role of wise law-givers, to try to remould existing laws nearer the integrated sense of humanity. In India, especially, Hindu law bristles with baffling vagaries and contradictions, even like that diverting mass of traditions and customs, the persistent Common Law of England. The other compartments of law in British India are the tragi-comic products of an alien and unsympathetic

administration, and they not unnaturally betray the wildest dichotomies in principle and practice. An earnest, intelligent and articulate public opinion, inspired by the leaders of the Bar, cannot fail to remedy this state of affairs. In a word, Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar's address on Law and Law Reform was a manifesto for change and for true progress.

Legends have an unfortunate tendency to grow round the names of the rich and the great. How often have we not heard the story of the late Pandit Motilal Nehru's having his clothes washed in Parisian laundries? It was left to his son, Pandit Jawaharlal, to contradict this absurd story in his Autobiography. Stories scarcely less wild have been passed round in hushed whispers about the princely life of Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar in the heyday of his professional pre-eminence. His imperiousness, his rough hectoring ways towards his juniors and his clients, his irritability, his high and haughty disdain, his aristocratic aloofness—sly insinuations about these could on odd occasions be overheard in exclusive circles even to-day. It is, perhaps, true enough that Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar at one time clothed himself with book-muslin and silk, that his servants had to sprinkle in his handkerchiefs Parisian scent, that he affected the proud aristocrat in bearing and feeling. As a matter of fact, he bore no man any ill-will, and although he could be occasionally sharp-tongued, the rage was never more than skin-deep. His acts were full of benevolence, and his rancour had ever the unsubstantiality of a passing shadow.

Some of the young men who had learnt the craft of advocacy in Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar's chambers are now themselves leaders of the Bar, in Madras or elsewhere. It was a great privilege to be allowed to watch that penetrating intellect reducing into order and proportion the multitude of conflicting facts and figures embodied in dusty parchments, in the judgements of the lower courts, in the repulsive heaps of contradictory evidence. It gave one a training in method, in inductive reasoning. It took the apprentice to the true laboratory of law, where, in the red-hot crucible of argument, principles and practices are resolved and dissolved and resolved again. But Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar's apprentices and juniors had other privileges as well. Now and then—fortunate

occasions though few—he would cease to be the lawyer and become in an instant a jurist, an animated expounder of the fundamental principles of law. It may be a little point arising out of the particular case on which he was engaged just then. But it suddenly became the starting point for a chain of reasoning that ultimately embraced the past, the present and the future of that branch of law. It needed no previous preparation, no present notes,—but the words came on, in precise and epigrammatic sentences, and then did the awed apprentices and juniors quite come under the irresistible fascination of that powerful intellect. No wonder the best products of the Law College helplessly gravitated to his chambers year after year.

By and by Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar's horizon was widening. He founded a munificent endowment to advance economic research in memory of the late Gopal Krishna Gokhale and his constructive contributions to the study of Indian economics. In 1912 he took a step further and got himself elected as a member of the Madras University Senate. The University was dominated in those days by a haughty clique of Europeans to whom a belittlement of things Indian was almost second nature. Not only was the curriculum unnecessarily weighted with English studies, but a study of Indian history and civilization was considered incompatible with the high ideals of the University. English history, European history, Greek and Roman history,—these were all to be studied with reverent care. But Indian history—no, there was no Indian history, it was all mere sound and fury, signifying nothing! If to-day Indian history is one of the optional subjects at the Intermediate as well as at the Degree examinations, it is a result of the tough fight that Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar put up in the Senate over twenty years ago. During the four years of his Senatorship, Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar was a power to be reckoned with and undoubtedly he did a great deal to make the University rational, and also national.

Everybody knew for sometime that Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar was marked for the Advocate-Generalship, and when the honour did seek him in 1916, it was universally hailed as just and proper. In due course he got the Compa-

nionship of the Indian Empire (C. I. E.) and it was a "foregone conclusion" that he would become the Law Member in the Governor's Executive Council, and perhaps in the Viceroy's Council as well. As the Advocate-General, Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar became an ex-officio member of the provincial Legislative Council and soon acquired an incisive mastery in debate. In 1916, too, Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar presided over the Coimbatore Social Conference.

Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar was doubtless a power within the Council and within the Madras High Court. But these are, after all, miniature conservatories with none of the significance of the wider, wilder world outside. In the year 1919, the Indian political kaleidoscope presented a new pattern that was at once a lure and a portent. Since the Surat imbroglio of 1907, the "Moderates" and the "Extremists" had pursued different paths altogether. For the time being, Gokhale and the Moderates ran the Congress organisation; and Tilak, the Generalissimo of the Extremists, was languishing in the Mandalay jail. By the end of 1915, however, both Gokhale and Sir Pherozeshah Mehta had passed away, and other Moderate leaders were too moderate to assert themselves. And Tilak was back in Poona; the old lion was back in its lair and was roaring. Official Congress policies were extremely tame and insipid; Tilak would revitalize them. Accordingly, with the co-operation of men like Joseph Baptista and Khaparde, he organized the nationalists into a fighting body and inaugurated the Home Rule League on the 23rd April, 1916. Presently, Mrs. Annie Besant joined the movement and started her All-India Home Rule League on the 1st September, 1916. Arundale and Wadia, Dr. Subramania Iyer and C. P. Ramaswami Iyer were among her chief lieutenants. The movement spread like wild fire. Madras came to the very vanguard of the nationalist agitation. Meanwhile, at the Lucknow Congress of 1916, under the presidency of Ambika Charan Mujumdar, a rapprochement had been effected between the Extremists and the surviving Moderates; and the Congress-League scheme for communal representation and constitutional reforms was approved. In result, the Congress found men like Tilak and Rash

Behary Ghosh, M. A. Jinnah and Gandhi, all working together on a common platform.

The War was dragging on and England's position was none too happy. India had stood by England loyally, and she fondly hoped that, at the conclusion of the War, a few more crumbs of "self-government" would surely be thrown before her. That is the purport of the Memorandum on Constitutional Reforms submitted in October 1916 to the Viceroy by nineteen elected members of the Imperial Legislative Council. The Home Rulers, however, pitched their battle cry on a more idealistic key. The Home Rule idea was gradually getting mixed up with religion and was on the point of becoming too dangerous to the bureaucracy. The bureaucracy acted. Mrs. Besant, Mr. Arundale and Mr. B. P. Wadia were interned at Coimbatore and Ootacamund. Repression was in full swing. But this did not daunt the soldiers of freedom. Never before or after had the Hindu and Muslim communities worked so unitedly and harmoniously. It was possible then to hold a joint-sitting of the Congress and Muslim League committees; and the members could pass the most weighty resolutions with unanimity. Even Passive Resistence as an aggressive weapon could be calmly discussed from the point of view of expediency rather than of religion.

In England Mr. E. S. Montagu, supposed to be a great friend of India, supplanted the Tory diehard, Mr. Austin Chamberlain, as Secretary of State for India. Reforms were in the air. In pursuance of the declaration on the 20th August, 1917, Mr. Montagu came over to India to study the situation at first hand. When he visited Madras he was presented with the Congress-League Scheme signed by over nine lakhs of citizens. From Mr. Montagu's diary we learn that among those who interviewed him was Mr. S. Srinivasa Iyengar. Mr. Montagu writes: "After I had finished with Lord Pentland the Advocate-general of the presidency, Srinivasa Iyengar, came to see me. He assured me that nobody really expected the whole of the Congress-League scheme and if they are certain that it will develop they will not much mind. He thinks the Curtis scheme is the best. He tells me that there is great bitterness against the

Government but he had nothing very much to say." Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar was not a congressman at this time, and in fact he little realized then the feverish pulse of the nation.

The year 1919 was a portentous one for many reasons. The Montagu-Chelmsford Report, that had been published in June of the previous year, had mischievously caused the little rift within the united nationalist lute, a rift that had by no means been repaired in the Special Congress of August under Hasan Imam's presidentship or the annual Congress of December under Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya's. It was again the same old story of sane timidity pitted against assertive self-respect. On the already disturbed political scene, the unimaginative Government hurled a bomb-shell in the shape of the Rowlatt Bills that sought still further to crib and cabin the elementary civil liberties of the people.

Enter Gandhi the Mahatma. Gandhi had returned to India some years previously, enveloped with legendary greatness on account of his conduct of successful Satyagraha in South Africa. On his return he had met both Tilak and Gokhale. Perhaps he timidly intimated to the latter the possibility of his launching Satyagraha in India as well. Gokhale, the Prince of the Moderates, the paragon of common-sense, warned Gandhi that India was not South Africa, and further advised him to make an extensive tour of the country, to come to grips with realities, and then, if he still must, to launch his soul-strategy on the issue of Swaraj. Gandhi apparently agreed. He played no very conspicuous part in the deliberations of the Congress and people often mistook him for a harmless old fogey. The Rowlatt Bills stirred him to a blaze of sudden activity. Why not smash the Bills by resorting to a campaign of nation-wide Satyagraha? Gandhi toured the country and thought that the secret pulses of the nation beat in true response to his projected campaign. The figure of that dark, frail being, clad in loin cloth, uttering common platitudes about Truth and Non-violence in a supremely disturbing manner, bewitching and annexing men in their thousands irresistibly; this phenomenon was too true to be good! But Gandhi staged his triumphant tour and announced that he would

lead a Passive Resistance Movement should the Rowlatt Bills be actually passed.

Meanwhile affairs were rushing to a crisis in the Punjab. It is needless to recapitulate now the whole series of unfortunate events in April 1919, culminating in the Jallianwala Bagh massacre and its attendant horrors that have created a record even in this land of untold horrors and iniquities. Should one attempt to detail them here, it is impossible to preserve one's temper even at this distance of time. Perhaps a cynical historian would look upon General Dyer, Colonel Johnson and Colonel O'Brien as three of the most effective among the makers of the new India of our aspirations. By their very ruthlessness they raised the issue of Indian independence to the highest moral tribunals, and since then the whole edifice of the bureaucracy has had once or twice to shake to its foundations like a thing unfirm and crumbling. Suffice to say that the Punjab wrongs miraculously served to focus public attention to the things that urgently mattered and India learnt with one voice to shout her grievances and demand immediate redress.

The prolongation of Martial Law even after the urgency for it had passed led to Sir Sankaran Nair's meritorious resignation of his membership of the Viceroy's Executive Council. Gandhi on his part gave up the idea of immediately launching his Passive Resistance movement. Deputations sailed to England to present India's case for freedom and Punjab's case for redress. The Government appointed the Hunter Commission to report on the Punjab disturbances, while the Congress instituted a separate enquiry under the direction of Gandhi, Motilal Nehru, C. R. Das, Fazl-ul-Huq and Abbas Tyabji. And presently, in a tense atmosphere, the 34th session of the Indian National Congress was held at Amritsar under the presidency of Pandit Motilal Nehru. The Moderates had as good as seceded from the Congress and were holding the first session of the Liberal Federation in Calcutta. The resolutions passed by the Congress at Amritsar, in the light of subsequent events, read to-day singularly tame and uninspiring. C. R. Das moved the main resolution that amounted to a summary rejection of the Reforms adumbrated in the new Act. But Gandhi prevailed

upon the Congress to add the rider that, for the time being, "so far as may be possible the people will so work the Reforms as to secure an early establishment of full Responsible Government." Gandhi, too, was responsible for other characteristic resolutions—one condemning mob violence, one "recommending a revival of the ancient industry of hand-spinning and hand-weaving", one on the issue of Prohibition, and so on. And Mr. C. Vijiaraghavachari had a resolution on Fundamental Rights passed at 10 o'clock in the night. The Congress broke up. But already Gandhi had unobtrusively gathered into his thin hands the incalculable powers latent in the premier National organization.

The new year ushered in little happiness and less prospect of it. The heart-beats of a nation's normal life had grown suddenly feverish. People well established in life, surrounded by the pomp of office and the luxury of huge incomes, found the very solid earth giving way under them, and involuntarily echoed Lokamanya Tilak's immortal words: "There comes a stage in our lives when we are not the sole masters of ourselves but must act as the representatives of our fellowmen." From the snugness of one's personal security one suddenly fell upon the hard rock of reality and felt the pricks of the thorns of life. The same sacred indignation that made Sir Sankaran Nair resign the high office of Law Membership in the Viceroy's Council also made Mr. S. Srinivasa Iyengar resign his Advocate-generalship in the Madras Government and consequently his membership of the Legislative Council as well. This was in February 1920. He addressed a crowded meeting at the Gokhale Hall and spoke in memorable language riddling the political situation with the confident clarity of his intellect. At one bound Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar was in the thick of the fight and his patriotism evoked nation-wide congratulations.

The publication of the non-official Congress Report on the Punjab atrocities was like rubbing salt on the national lacerations. And the situation was worsened by the publication almost simultaneously of the official Hunter Report and of the proposed peace terms to Turkey. Muslim opinion was in frenzied excitement over the latter, while the whole

nation looked upon the Hunter Report as a further insult to the national self-respect. In the figurative language of Dr. Pattabi Sitaramayya, "the 'Triveni' of the Kilafat and Punjab wrongs, and the invisible flow of inadequate Reforms, became full to the brim, and by their confluence enriched both in volume and content the stream of national discontent." Passive Resistance on a vast scale seemed to be imminent. And Gandhi was consulting the Kilafat leaders, was sounding Congress leaders like Tilak, was taking stock of the situation. A terribly uneasy apprehension about the future was everywhere evident.

It was at such a time that Mr. S. Srinivasa Iyengar was called upon to preside over the Madras Provincial Conference held at Tinnevelly. The Rt. Hon. V. S. Srinivasa Sastri was there, and so was Mr. S. Satyamurti. The previous Provincial Conference that had been held in Tinnevelly had been presided over by the late V. Krishnaswami Iyer. In his excellent Presidential Address, Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar made grateful reference to Krishnaswami Iyer and then proceeded to analyse the political situation with incisive outspokenness and patriotic fervour. The Punjab, seen through Pandit Motilal's lens at Amritsar, loomed large in the Address, and Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar struck a responsive chord in the assembled delegates by affirming our national self-respect and repudiating the stigma of incompetence repeatedly cast at us by our rulers. It was a memorable session, and it successfully put Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar through the baptism of political leadership.

By now Gandhi had quite withdrawn his support to the new Reforms and was eagerly hatching his plans for launching Passive Resistance. An All-Parties Conference met at Allahabad on the 2nd June and a committee consisting of Gandhi and some Muslim leaders was appointed to draw up a specific pragramme. This committee decided to advise the boycott of educational institutions and law courts. The Kilafat leaders readily agreed to the triple boycott of the councils, the law courts and the educational institutions, and hence the Non-cooperation movement was inaugurated on the 1st of August. The Congress organization, on the other hand, hesitated a little longer. Tilak was doubtful of

the success of the new experiment, but wished it godspeed all the same. And when he died soon after, millions of his countrymen tearfully mourned the loss of one of the prime architects of renascent India.

A special session of the Indian National Congress was held from the 4th to the 9th of September in Calcutta, under the presidentship of the late Lala Lajpat Rai. After resolutions on Tilak's sad demise and on the Hunter Report, Gandhi moved his contentious resolution on Non-cooperation. Its preamble stated that the Government had failed to satisfy Indian opinion regarding both the Kilafat and Punjab wrongs and concluded therefrom that "there can be no contentment in India without redress of the two aforementioned wrongs." What was the solution then? The establishment of Swarajya. How were the wrongs to be righted and Swarajya achieved? "By adopting the policy of non-violent. Non-cooperation inaugurated by Mahatma Gandhi." A simple political issue—the liberation of India from a condition of slavery—was thus cleverly camouflaged with religious, ethical, moral and economic considerations. Kilafat and the Punjab! As if there had been no other reasons why Swarajya should be established! And, in the resolution, Swarajya itself seems to have been added more as an afterthought than as something integral to our struggle for self-expression. Renunciation of titles received from the Government; withdrawal of children from schools and colleges; boycott of British courts, boycott of the new legislatures; boycott of foreign goods; and, finally, the revival of hand-spinning in every house "and hand-weaving on the part of the millions of weavers who have abandoned their ancient and honourable calling for want of encouragement:" on top of all came the assurance that "non-cooperation has been conceived as a measure of discipline and self-sacrifice." Well might the august assembly at Calcutta have thrown out this eccentric resolution, nearly agreeing with the Viceroy that it was "the most foolish of all foolish schemes." On the contrary, the Congress passed the resolution by 1886 votes against 884. What had happened, then?

It was Mahatma Gandhi performing his first incantatory feat. Intellectuals might be puzzled, but the masses seemed

to react to the new gospel with surprising readiness. The gospel was a curious blend of asceticism and assertion of national self-respect, an emphasis on specific minor issues and an agreeable blurring of the outlines. In Mr. Rushbrook-Williams's words, "this was in essence an attempt to assert the claims of Indian civilization, of Indian culture, and of Indian values against the dominance of the Western World." Lalaji, Motilal Nehru, C. R. Das, Kasturiranga Iyengar, Vijiaraghavachari, they all quietly succumbed. Some of them who had announced their candidature in the ensuing elections now withdrew from the contest. In vain moaned Mr. Khaparde that Gandhi sought "to divert the energies of the Congress into directions of attaining soul-force and moral excellence, and loses sight of the political aspect of affairs." Gandhi overwhelmed the doubting Thomases and ignored the avowed opponents; he was immense, and he suggested to his followers multitudes in thought and feeling.

But the battle was not over yet. The whole question was reopened at the Nagpur Congress, which was presided over by the G. O. M. of India, Vijiaraghavachari. It was he who made the demand for Swaraj transcend the demands for the redress of the Kilafat and Punjab wrongs. C. R. Das came with a huge contingent of delegates to wreck non-cooperation, but ultimately supported it instead. Colonel Wedgewood spoke in vain that adoption of the programme meant going into the wilderness. It was no use; what Sir Sankaran Nair has called "Gandhi's self-hypnotization" infected the whole assembly and made it equally daemonic in conviction and action. The Congress Constitution, too, was considerably amended.

What was Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar doing all this time? In all conscience, he was puzzled by the sudden onrush of events in India. It was obvious the Non-cooperation resolution, in theory as well as in practice, threw logic to the four winds with a characteristic purblindness of academic political vision. Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar might have wondered, as other intellectuals had wondered, why Gandhi should have absurdly circumscribed the conflict to the very narrow issues of the Kilafat and Punjab wrongs. We now know that it is

part of Gandhi's strategy—conscious or subconscious. Rowlatt Bills, Kilafat, Punjab, Salt, Assurance, Rajkot . . . these issues are important no doubt; but Gandhi has invested them all with an absurdly bloated significance every time he has handled one or other of these as a weapon for mass suggestion. A very small thing but a very precise thing, and hence it could be grasped by the meanest intelligence. For the rest, Gandhi's method is reiteration. He and his followers should repeat the same thing over and over again, till the mass mind helplessly reacts to the suggestion; opportunities that have been afforded by these apparently innocuous forms of nation-wide activity are indirectly harnessed to instil into the mass-mind a sense of sturdy independence, but also of dependence on the Congress in general and on Gandhi in particular. Thus it is that the succession of "Himalayan Blunders", far from diminishing Gandhi's prestige, has only enhanced it, so much so, to-day, albeit not even a four-anna member, he is very nearly the *de facto* ruler of the Congress.

All this however was yet in the womb of time in the autumn of 1920. Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar decided he would not throw in his lot with Gandhi, and therefore he successfully contested the University seat, and became a member of the Madras Legislative Council. But like all Indians at the time, Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar was evidently feeling uncomfortable. Why, why should there be all this suffering, this vicarious suffering by the innocent to expiate the sins of others? The Ali Brothers, Desabandhu Das and his son, Pandit Motilal and his son, C. Rajagopalachari, Lalaji, Govind Malaviya, Dr. Kitchlew, Prakasam—these and twenty thousand other civil resisters were in jail. It was no doubt true that the Triple Boycott was at best a moral success. Leading lawyers like Nehru and Das, Rajendra Prasad and V. J. Patel, and hundreds of others gave up their lucrative practice, but the law courts flourished still. Hundreds of students walked out of the educational institutions, but schools and colleges went on with their work with scarce a tremor. And though the fighting nationalists had spurned the new legislatures, others were quite willing to enter them and accept office under Dyarchy. No; on the

specific issues on which Gandhi fought his campaign he met with little success. But the remuneration was in the shape of an unconscious rallying together of the agitated forces in renascent India, in the triumphant assertion of national self respect that refused to kowtow to the bureaucracy, and that met expediency and practical politics by the imponderable universes of non-violence and voluntary suffering.

Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar could hesitate no longer. What though he still disagreed with Gandhi's theories and practices? The man himself was no fraudulent article; and he was supremely unselfish and unblemished. The movement lacked logic and lacked an intelligent focus: but it was no matter; it was educating the masses of India in independence of thought and imperturbability in the face of oppression. That really was not the time to spin out one's dialectic and to try to score a point over another. And Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar was not devoid of common-sense to grasp at once that in some inexplicable way Gandhi *was* galvanizing the masses into a high potential of patriotic endeavour. He fell in with Gandhi's policy of boycott and, as a protest against the Government's repressive policy, he returned his C. I. E. and resigned his membership of the Madras Legislative Council.

The next session of the Indian National Congress was held at Ahmedabad on the 27th December, 1921. C. R. Das was to have presided but the Bengal Government had intervened and put him behind prison bars, and hence Hakim Ajmal Khan, "the embodiment of Hindu-Muslim Unity", acted as substitute. Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar attended this session. Das's address was read out by Mrs. Sarojini Naidu and intellectuals like Vijiaraghavachari and Srinivasa Iyengar should have felt pleased that the objective of the non-cooperation campaign was widened to comprehend the establishment of Swaraj. Mahatma Gandhi also spoke with great fervour in moving the main resolution: "This resolution means that we have outgrown the stage of helplessness and dependence upon anybody; this resolution means that the nation through its representatives is determined to have its own way with the help of only God above." Gandhi was appointed by the Congress to be the sole executive authority to conduct the campaign, with the power, besides, to appoint

a successor in case of any emergency. When Maulana Hazarat Mohani moved a resolution defining 'Swaraj' as "complete independence, free from all foreign control", Gandhi opposed it with vehemence and persuaded the Congress to turn it down.

It was fatally easy to carp and cavil at the substantial failure of Gandhi's movement. Swaraj was to come before September 1921, but it didn't come; it was to come before December, and again it just didn't come. Where was the 'Swaraj in one year' that Gandhi had promised? It was all true. Was Gandhi then always talking with mental reservations? The cold, passionless gaze of Sir Sankaran Nair could point to the palpable fact that "almost every item in his (Gandhi's) programme has been tried and found useless to attain Home Rule." The normal activities of the Congress were suspended by the Ahmedabad resolution and the initiative was given to individual Passive Resisters. It was 'anarchy'—the cry went, and in a sense, it was true.

Did Gandhi make any secret of the fact? Categorically he announced, in public meeting after public meeting, that his object was to create disaffection against the 'Satanic' government and to try to overthrow it. By asserting the pre-eminence of a religious outlook—at any rate of a religiously pure attitude towards politics—and at the same time by castigating every vestige of the British Government—the judicial and educational institutions not excepted—as being 'Satanic', Gandhi unquestionably played with the smouldering fires of religious fanaticism in the country. The Moplahs of Malabar took the law into their own hands and the crimes they perpetrated form another harrowing chapter in India's history. Muslims who had taken Gandhi's 'Swaraj in one year' promise literally and without qualification experienced a violent revulsion in feeling when, to all intents and purposes, the country was no nearer Swaraj in 1922 than she had been two years earlier. Disillusionment was at least one of the causes that led to riots of all kinds all over the country. Hartals in connection with the Prince of Wales's visit to the country also led to many unseemly sights, not always consonant with the principles of non-violence. In lurid extravagance the Chauri-Chaura exhibition

of mob violence brought home to Gandhi the utter unpreparedness of the country for the embarcation of mass Civil Disobedience. Gandhi wisely gave up his idea of resorting to civil disobedience in Bardoli, and abruptly called off the movement. And the first Act of the Non-cooperation drama presently terminated in the epic glory of his arrest, trial and conviction.

What next? Repression was rampant still and the soldiers of freedom were dispirited and almost pathetically disillusioned. The next meeting of the A.-I. C. C. appointed a Committee consisting of Hakim Ajmal Khan, Motilal Nehru, Ansari, Rajagopalachari, Bajaj, V. J. Patel and Chothani, to tour the country and to report on the situation. Kasturiranga Iyengar later replaced Bajaj and Chothani could never participate in its labours. The Committee virtually recommended the suspension of the boycott of courts and educational institutions. It unanimously recommended that non-cooperators should seek election to Municipalities and local boards "with a view to facilitate the working of the constructive programme." All the members of the Committee except Rajagopalachari accepted the principle of boycott of British goods. On the question of entry into legislative councils, however, the Committee was sharply divided. Ansari, Rajagopalachari and Kasturiranga Iyengar were for the continuation of the boycott of the legislatures while Hakim Ajmal Khan, Motilal Nehru and V. J. Patel were for congressmen entering the councils and non-cooperating from within. The Report thus made no secret of the fact that council-entry had become a formidable proposition in Congress circles. The A.-I. C. C. that was held at Calcutta took no decision on this issue but left it to be tackled by the open Congress.

The Gaya Congress was presided over by C. R. Das, the most outstanding among the apostles of council-entry. In the course of an elaborate and impassioned address, Das cleverly tried to make out that council-entry was not inconsistent with non-cooperation: "An advancing army does not co-operate with the enemy when it marches into the enemy's territory . . . Whenever the phrase 'entry into councils' is used it calls up the association of co-operation

CHAPTER II

LEADER

A mass meeting was held on the Madras Beach immediately after the general elections. Srinivasa Iyengar and Rajagopalachari both addressed the mammoth gathering. The people's jubilations were infectious to a degree. Srinivasa Iyengar declared: "We have fought the elections with success, but it is only fighting ourselves. We have yet to fight the bureaucracy". Rajagopalachari complimented Srinivasa Iyengar on his sterling leadership and the people on their wonderful response. In other meetings Prakasam, Satyamurti, C. N. Muthuranga Mudaliar and Sami Venkatachalam Chetty spoke confidently about the future of the nationalist movement. The Justice Party, thoroughly humbled at the polls, satisfied itself with abuse and misrepresentation. To infuse the carcase of the party with the Promethean heat of life it was decided to instal A. Ramaswami Mudaliar in the editorial sanctum of *Justice*. For the rest, the Madras Council was composed of a number of 'Independents', independent of one another and independent of the rest. These formed in aggregate the strongest party next to the Congress. They decided to club together under the leadership of Dr. Subbarayan, but the Independents were indeed (in Pandit Motilal's excellent phraseology, though concocted on a different occasion) "a conglomerate in the first stage of geological formation". Such was the condition of parties in the Madras Council when Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar proceeded to Gauhati to preside over the deliberations of the forty-first session of the Indian National Congress.

Congress affairs outside the Madras Presidency were by no means as satisfactory. Not only was the breach between the Swarajists and the Responsivists unhealed, but differences arose between Pandit Motilal and Lala Lajpatrai regarding the efficacy of the walk-out that had been staged by the former in the Assembly earlier in the year. Soon the controversy descended to a low level of personal recrimination and unseemly abuse. Pandit Malaviya joined hands with Lalaji

and they formed the Independent Congress Party. Pandit Malaviya at one time wanted to contest Motilal's own seat. Statements and counter-statements flooded the country to the great delectation of the enemies of the Congress and of the country. There was talk of a sort of Round Table Conference bringing together Lalaji, Malaviyaji and Motilalji, to be convened by Mrs. Sarojini Naidu; there was talk of a possible concordat between the two venerable Pandits of Allahabad. But nothing tangible was done. The nationalist forces of North India presented an unsavoury spectacle of defeatism and disunion. It was the almost Herculean task of bringing about a measure of workable unity between all these warring sections that the new Congress President, Srinivasa Iyengar, was called upon by a discomfited nation to undertake.

On December 26, 1926, the Congress session commenced. The distinguished gathering included Mahatma Gandhi, the Ali Brothers, Pandit Motilal Nehru, Pandit Malaviya, Mrs. Sarojini Naidu and Maulana Abul Kalam Azad. Mr. T. R. Phookun, M. L. A., Chairman of the Reception Committee, welcoming the assembled delegates to distant Assam, referred to Lord Birkenhead's challenge and Lord Reading's gratuitous appeal for co-operation; he regretted the continued friction between the two great communities in India and deplored the secession of personalities like Jayakar, Moonje, Kelkar, Malaviya, Lajpatrai and Aney from the majority party of the Congress; and he concluded by sombrely reminding the Congress: "Deliverance of a mighty nation enslaved by the merciless decree of Providence rests with you".

Just before the presidential procession at Gauhati, the shocking news of the murder of Swami Shraddanand at the hands of a Muslim fanatic had thrown arrangements out of gear and destroyed the residuum of political equanimity among the Congress leaders. The procession had been abandoned, but the gloom persisted even when the President rose to deliver his address. He began by paying the more than formal tribute to the memory of Swami Shraddanand and expressed his gratitude to the country for the signal honour it had conferred upon him. He had accepted the "responsibilities of this great office, made more formidable to

me by the lustre of great names, at a time as Mahatma Gandhi put it 'of unexampled difficulty', only in the belief that it was a compliment to South India . . ." Without any further preliminaries, Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar declared: "The foremost of our duties for the coming year is to mobilize all our forces on the issue of the National Demand". He then traced the history of the National Demand through the resolutions of February 1924 and of September 1925 in the Legislative Assembly, the Muddiman Committee's unsatisfactory Majority Report, the Cawnpore resolution and the subsequent walk-out by the Swarajist members, and their further appeal to the country in the general elections. Srinivasa Iyengar felt convinced that the results of the elections "have justified the policy of the Swarajya Party . . . and have abundantly proved the wisdom of the great experiment inaugurated by the Congress at its Cawnpore session". That the results were not more sweepingly successful in some provinces was "due solely to the fact that congressmen there were divided amongst themselves and was not due to the superiority in the programme or policy of any definite political party".

What was the true significance of the success of the Congress at the polls? "He who runs may read the lesson of the elections that the centre of political gravity has decisively and definitely shifted from the bureaucracy and its Indian supporters to the National Congress. . . It signalizes the enthronement of a sound and robust nationalism in the place of communalism as a dominant political factor . . . Nor can we overlook that the elections, with all the difficulties that we had to face, have been a severe test of our capacity for Swaraj and have given us patience, skill, a quiet confidence, a nation-wide organization, party loyalty and a thoroughly democratic outlook".

Turning to the work before the Congress, Srinivasa Iyengar reiterated the undesirability of trying to work dyarchy. When the Government talked of co-operation, it really required that "the Congress should give up its demand and merge itself in the bureaucracy". He then proceeded to an exhaustive analysis of the salient features of the Reform Act and conclusively showed how "under this grotesque

system the Ministers are always under official tutelage and domination, so that they cannot breathe the oxygen of freedom". "It would be a tragedy therefore", he pungently snapped, "if we still sought to discover, in all this statutory hypocrisy, the germs of self-government".

Then came a reference to "the gesture of peace that was made by the heroic figure of Desabandhu Das", followed by an outspoken statement on the repressive policy of the Government: "The long history of repression, that has darkened our struggle for freedom, proves that the curve of repression and the curve of reforms go intertwined; of repression gilded with reforms, of reforms withered by repression. The case of the Bengal internees as well as of the Sikh patriots is about the most flagrant violation of elementary justice that we have had; and the harrowing story of the Bengal Ordinance and other internees as well as the earlier story of the Punjab agony and abasement shows that we are asked always to move in a vicious circle with shame and humiliation as our badge and not Swaraj as our birthright."

What was to be the political objective of the Indian people? Neither provincial autonomy nor truncated central responsibility would meet the situation. The President contrasted India's status with that of the other units in the Empire and said that India's position was anomalous and humiliating. "Any scheme of self-government will be nothing but an empty form if the control over the army and navy and the control over the political relations with Indian States . . . are not given to our Swaraj Government". Here he gave a fitting reply to those who ever parrot the cry that we cannot man our navy and army if the British withdrew from India. "Free India can buy and man a fleet and maintain an army on the most modern lines. It is, in the ultimate analysis, nothing but a question of finance and the training of men". As regards work in the legislatures, Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar believed that congressmen should (a) refuse to accept offices until the Government responded properly to the National Demand; (b) refuse supplies and throw out budgets until such a response was made by the Government; (c) throw out the proposals of the bureaucracy for legislative enactments; (d) move or support resolutions that might aid

the Constructive Programme of the Congress; (e) take steps for the betterment of the condition of agricultural tenants; and (e) "generally protect the rights of labour, agricultural and industrial, and adjust the relations between landlords and tenants, capitalists and workmen". The programme, thus, was a blend of Parnellist obstructionism and Fabian socialism. From this he passed on to a consideration of the question of office-acceptance. He had no difficulty in showing that under the Mont-Ford reforms acceptance of Ministerships would be foolish and futile. "After the severest denunciations of the Reform Act on a thousand platforms and the most cogent demonstrations of the futility of taking office, it were an anti-climax to think of Ministries now". However Mr. Iyengar suggested that office might be accepted if the Government made overtures "similar to those that were adumbrated by Desabandhu Das at Faridpur".

The President then passed on to deal with the necessity of so overhauling the Congress machinery that it may in time constitute a 'national government'. "Congress should have the fullest control over the people and should have a steadily increasing number of workers knit together in bonds of unshakable loyalty and perfect understanding. . . . . If incessant propaganda is carried on in town and in village, if the congressmen inside and outside the councils interest themselves, each group in the work of the other, and if people are organized in respect of grievances upon which they feel most strongly, the end will soon be in sight. . . . . Mastery, as has rightly been said, is acquired by resolved limitation; and the acid test of Indian leadership, of resolute patriotism and of constructive ability, consists in the determination and contentment of men to organize and lead villages for the cause of Swaraj. The secret of success in the work of village reconstruction mainly lies in the discovery of apt rural leadership. . . . In this way the Congress will ere long become the national government."

Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar then dwelt on such specific issues before Congressmen as the capture of all local bodies, the production and popularization of Khaddar, the enforcement of Prohibition, the eradication of untouchability and unemployment and the amelioration of the condition of

peasants and industrial labourers. The Government's Currency policy next came in for some trenchant criticism: "The question should not be regarded as a recondite question for economic Pundits or as if its eventual adjustment does not mean serious loss at present. The Currency policy of the Government has a far-reaching importance; it not only affects certain key interests but the general welfare of the country." Adverting to the unique position of the Indian States and their future, Mr. Iyengar wisely laid down that "the rulers of the Indian States ought, in their own interests and in the interests of their subjects, to content themselves with the position of hereditary governors or administrators of their territories under a system of representative institutions and responsible government". Dealing with the humiliations imposed upon Indians in places like Australia, Kenya, Ceylon, Fiji and elsewhere and with particular reference to the term 'cooly' as a term of infinite reproach, Mr. Iyengar brilliantly defended the status of the 'cooly' and even carried the war into the enemy's camp: "the term 'cooly' connotes the dignity of labour and the Indian cooly settler, lowly as he is, is far superior in status to the original convict settler in Australia".

By far the most impassioned parts of Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar's presidential address were those devoted to a consideration of the need for a communal settlement and for the immediate formation of a united front of nationalists, determined to resist the alien bureaucracy with might and main. He was painfully conscious of the tense situation in the country: "The riots and disturbances that have recently disfigured our social life have drawn forth nearly all that is bad in communalism". But the results of the elections were more hopeful. "I am confident", Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar remarked, "that wherever intensive propaganda, sincere and persuasive, clearly analyses the fallacies underlying it, communalism will go to the wall . . . Again, who will not agree, after some political education, that communal conflicts necessarily involve that there should be an arbiter and that if the whole of India were divided into two warring communities, the arbiter would always be a foreigner? We must not only reach, but hold fast to the conviction that we

are Indians first and last and right through. National representation and national leadership must be our aim and not communal representation and communal leadership." Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar then made pointed reference to the histories of Britain, France, South Africa, and Canada and showed that initial communal or racial or linguistic differences had not stood in the way of national unity. Further, he assured the religious minorities in India that a Swaraj constitution for India will make due provision for fundamental safeguards. He exposed the absurdity and futility of communal electorates in fact as well as in constitutional theory. Finally he asserted, in a particularly fervent passage, that neither Hinduism nor Islam stood in any real danger from each other or from any alien source: "Let us not forget, in the fever of political controversy, that the strength of each religion is derived from God and is rooted in the souls of Prahladas. Not all the tortures of a Torquemada nor all the burning at the stakes nor all other forms of persecution have been able to destroy the mystic quality of the human soul. Neither Hinduism nor Islam derives or requires strength either from the present or from any future Government. Both stand far, far above Swaraj, which is not comparable to them. Neither foreign Governments nor self-governments, neither democracies nor autocracies, can destroy that seed of faith which is in every one of us, that inspired interpretation of the Universe to which one clings for guidance and solace in this world and for salvation in the next."

The 'appeal for unity' with which the address concluded was an even more sustained intellectual and emotional treat. It visibly breathed the speaker's supreme sincerity and earnestness. "It appears to me," he remarked sadly, "that the vision of Swaraj has become somewhat dim in the dust of internal strife and our hunger for it less keen in our greater desire for the philosophy of individualism . . . . The need of the hour is not philosophy but action, not freedom for the individual but freedom for the nation, not alone unity in ideal and object but also unity in method and action, direction and pace, and above all, not polemics and projects, but organization and discipline. Should we have

distinct parties in the Congress or the country? . . . The answer comes again and again from the depths of our being, from the holy of holies, from our tortured soul, that the righteous should link hands against the unrighteous. There can be only two parties in India, the party of the Government and its adherents that obstruct Swaraj and the party that fights visibly and unceasingly for Swaraj. An army has several arms, but it would be a singular army indeed if its cavalry fought its infantry and its artillery opened fire on both . . . . On a point of religion, of morality, of honour, one's own conscience must be the arbiter, but in transacting the affairs of a country, when a decision is not irreligious, immoral or dishonourable, I fail to see how we may rely on our right to differ from one another and yet uphold the discipline necessary for an organization fighting for Swaraj . . . . What is needed to break our bonds is only that we should get rid of this creeping paralysis of brain and will, of this hypnotism which the foreigner exercises over the Indian . . . Swaraj is not an intellectual but an emotional proposition. We must cherish it in our hearts with unquenchable faith. Neither genial humour nor mordant sarcasm, neither the persuasion of friends nor the wrath of foes, neither appreciation nor calumny should make our patriotism tepid or qualify the singleness of our purpose. We must therefore become possessed by a passion for Swaraj that is not warped by fallacies and impulses, that will stand for a uniform and rapid corporate advance in serried masses, that will know no obstacles, that will not wax and wane with the seasons, that will not be daunted by imprisonments or depressed by failures."

That was the end of a singularly thoughtful and moving address—an address that received the highest encomiums from all the nationalistic papers in India. Its obvious candour and honesty, its sweep of intellectual vigour and emotional exaltation and its unflinching assertion of the inalienable rights of India and Indians made it one of the finest pronouncements in the Congress.

There was nothing unusual about the resolutions passed by the Gauhati Congress. The main resolution on the Council Programme was along the lines indicated in the

President's address. Pandit Malaviya could not agree with the official programme, and Kelker and Jayakar were absent. Rangaswami Iyengar was elected the Working Secretary and the Working Committee itself was representative and quite strong. The Gauhati Congress broke up after transacting, with statesmanship and quiet dignity, the pressing business before it.

The interest now shifts to the Legislative Assembly and the Provincial Councils. The congressmen numbered about forty in the Assembly and they elected Pandit Motilal as Leader, Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar as Deputy Leader and Mr. Rangaswami Iyengar as Secretary. The Nationalists included the Responsivists and the Independent congressmen, and were led by Lala Lajpatrai and Mr. Jayakar, but Malaviya and Kelkar were equally prominent members in its ranks. V. J. Patel was re-elected President unanimously. The new Assembly held its sittings in the luxuriously constructed Legislative Buildings in New Delhi. On the 21st January 1927, "Pandit Motilal Nehru opened the first attack on the policy of the Government by moving a motion for the adjournment of the House to discuss the non-attendance of Mr. Satyendra Chandra Mitra, who had been elected to the Legislative Assembly whilst a prisoner under the Bengal Criminal Law Amendment Act". Pandit Motilal was followed by the Government spokesman, Sir Alexander Muddiman, who defended the policy of the Government, and incidentally made it clear that the privileges of the members of Indian legislatures were more imaginary than real. Presently, Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar was on his feet, and, in his maiden speech, exposed ably and convincingly the self-stultifying fraud of the Government's position. In the end, the adjournment motion, on its own merits, went against the Government by a majority of 18 votes. This debate early established Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar as a debater of the first rank, capable of crossing swords with the keenest and most alert intellects in the House.

It was about this time that events in China were focussing world-attention on them. The victorious armies of the Kuo-min-tang, led by Marshal Chiang Kai-Shek, had captured Hankow and were vigorously pushing towards the

North and the East. It was rumoured that the various foreign governments interested in the International Settlement were intending to send detachments to China to "safeguard their legitimate interests". Everybody knew, of course, what that quintessential diplomatic phrase meant. Indian sympathies went out spontaneously to the people of China struggling to be free from all foreign shackles. Lord Irwin's speech before the Assembly on the 24th January justified one's worst fears. He informed the Assembly that Indian troops were about to be sent to China for a purely defensive purpose. There was a huge outcry in the country against the action of the British Government in utilizing the Indian Army for Britain's imperialist purposes. The next day Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar gave notice of a motion for the adjournment of the House in order to raise a discussion on the action of the Government of India in sending Indian troops to China. Sir Alexander Muddiman, the Home Member, objected to the motion, and other members aired their views on the subject. The President, however, ruled the motion in order, but before it could be taken up for discussion later in the same day, an ukase was received from the Viceroy disallowing the motion as "affecting the relations of His Majesty's Government or of the Governor-general in Council with a foreign state". This did not prevent Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar and other prominent nationalists from ventilating their views on the subject before a crowded public meeting in Delhi.

On the 2nd February, again, Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar moved another adjournment motion in order to "discuss the serious situation created by the decision of the Government in putting off the discussion of the Indian Currency Bill till after the disposal of the Railway Budget and till after the presentation of the General Budget". Everybody knew that the Currency Bill was going to be a true trial of strength between the Government and the Opposition. The Government's strategy was to postpone discussion on the Bill till the fag end of the session when the Opposition would ordinarily be very thin. Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar therefore rightly considered this as creating a serious situation. Fortunately, and mainly due to his presentation of the case, the adjournment

motion was passed. Later in the session, when the Railway Budget was under discussion, Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar moved that all but Rs. 100 of the demand for the Railway Board should be refused. In his able speech he drew attention to the unsatisfactory character of the constitution and working of the Board and to the way it vitiated the entire administration of Indian Railways. After Pandit Motilal, Sir Clement Hindley and others had spoken, the motion was ultimately carried by 59 against 52 votes. The Opposition scored several other victories during the session, though in regard to the ratio question, in spite of excellent speeches by Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar and Sir Purushottamdas Thakurdas, the Opposition was narrowly defeated by 65 to 68. In any case, the Congress-Nationalist Opposition had a good record to its credit and it had certainly exposed the irresponsible nature of the Central Executive.

While things were like this in the Assembly, the Swarajists in the Provincial Councils were pursuing a curious and uncertain course. In Bengal and the C. P. Dyarchy had been reinstated. In Madras, indeed, Mr. Narasimha Raju, the Congress nominee, had been elected Council President after he had previously refused to accept office when invited to do so by the Governor. The Swarajists would not, and the Justicites could not, form a ministry. An 'Independent' Ministry was formed by Dr. Subbarayan. What was the Congress Party going to do? Its new leader, Sami Venkatachalam Chetty, and Deputy Leader, Satyamurti, were disinclined to oust Subbarayan and put the Raja of Panagal in his place. Conditions in the Madras presidency were very peculiar and the electorate had voted for the Congress largely on the supposition that it would keep the Justicites out. But the wording in the Gauhati resolution on the Council Programme gave no loophole of escape. "And oppose the formation of a ministry by other parties"—that was the injunction. Perhaps, Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar, the Congress President and President of the Tamil Nadu Congress Committee, was himself unwilling to turn Subbarayan out. This particular clause, it appears, had been intended as a "direct hit against the wobbling

Swarajists of Madras—and was inserted as the result of an amendment to the official proposition—which did not originally contemplate it—by some friend in the North whose logic proved too much even for the astute intellects of the South". That is Dr. Pattabi writing on the Gauhati Decision in the *Indian Review;* and the same writer notes—"It was passed and our South Indian friends were caught unawares. They were looking vacant and helpless". Be that as it may, the Congress Party decided for the time being to keep Subbarayan and his colleagues in office. This circumstance was to bring on Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar's head the accumulated wrath of all kinds of opponents.

The general rule with Congress Presidents is to relapse into somnolent inactivity after the Congress Session, coming to brief spells of life during the meetings of the A.-I. C. C. or of the Working Committee. Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar was made of different stuff altogether. He early made up his mind to tackle the pressing Hindu-Muslim question and to arrive at a lasting settlement before the expiry of his presidency. Accordingly he toured the length and breadth of the country, held innumerable informal consultations with leaders of both the communities and explored all possible avenues towards an amicable and final settlement. Already the members of the Muslim Community in the Central Legislatures and other leaders of the community had met on the 20th March and issued a statement that their community would agree to Joint Electorates provided Sind and the N. W. F. province and Baluchistan were constituted separate provinces. "If these conditions were accepted by the Hindu and Muhammadan Communities, Muhammadans would accept the system of joint electorates in all provinces and would make to the Hindu minorities, in the provinces where the Hindus were in a minority, the same concessions that the Hindus were prepared to make to Muhammadan minorities elsewhere". Mr. M. A. Jinnah issued a statement shortly after intimating that the proposals should be accepted in toto. Working on these proposals in the light of his conversations with important all-India leaders, Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar was able to make the Congress Working Committee, and later the A.-I. C. C., agree to a very equitable

formula of Joint Electorates with reservation of seats for minorities. Introducing this subject before the Bombay meeting of the A.-I. C. C. in May 1927, Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar emphasized the need for bringing about cordial relations between the two great communities and his words produced the proper atmosphere for the consideration of so great a problem. Pandit Motilal, who moved the Working Committee's resolution, assured the House that he "would not hesitate to humble himself to the very dust, if thereby we can bring forward Hindu-Muslim unity". Dr. Ansari and Mohamed Ali and Mr. Jayakar raised the discussion to a high level of seriousness and sober understanding. Finally, a resolution was passed that provided for joint electorates with reservation of seats "on the population basis in every province and in the Central Legislature"—this however qualified by the words, "for the present, and if desired". Another important rider stated—"provided that reciprocal concessions in favour of minorities including the Sikhs in the Punjab may be made by mutual agreement so as to give them representation in excess of the proportion of the number of seats to which they would be entitled on the population basis in any province or provinces, and the proportions so agreed upon for the provinces shall be maintained in the representations of the two communities in the Central Legislature from the provinces". The three principles here accepted are *joint electorates, reservation of seats* and *weightage for the minorities*. The resolution further accepted the principle of constituting Sind, the N. W. F. and Baluchistan as separate provinces as also other linguistic provinces like Andhra and Karnataka. Lastly, it accepted healthy propositions on 'liberty of conscience' and on bills relating to 'inter-communal matters'. This resolution, passed unanimously by the A.-I. C. C., and blessed by leaders like Ansari and Mohamed Ali on the one hand and Jayakar and Motilal Nehru on the other, constituted a triumph of constructive and sane statesmanship. The resolution conceded practically all that Jinnah and his friends had demanded, and in fact it brought the whole thing within the domain of immediate practical politics. Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar was universally applauded for his work in this connection.

There were still one or two matters that were the means of causing incessant friction between the two communities, viz. music before mosques, cow-killing by the Muslims and conversions. These contentious matters had time and again ignited many disastrous communal riots whose number in 1927 was increasing rather than otherwise. Lord Irwin, in his address to the Central Legislature in August, had exhorted Indian leaders to do something in the matter and ease the situation. Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar applied himself to this stupendous task and organized, under the auspices of the A.-I. C. C., the Unity Conference that met in Calcutta on the 27th October. His opening speech was very well received by a representative gathering that included, among others, Goswami, Sen Gupta, Prakasam, Rangaswami Iyengar, Dr. Ansari, the Ali Brothers, C. F. Andrews, and Sir P. C. Ray. In the end a resolution was adopted by the Conference covering all the points at issue. Conversion by force or of minors should not be resorted to; processions with music may be taken before any mosque at any time but "there should be no stoppage of the processions nor special demonstrations in front of a mosque"; Muslims may sacrifice cows anywhere except "a thoroughfare, nor one in the vicinity of a temple or a mandir nor one exposed to the gaze of Hindus; and cows should not be led in procession or in demonstration for sacrifice". The resolutions were later approved, in an extended form, by the A.-I. C. C. at Calcutta in October, 1927. These resolutions, along with the resolutions passed at Bombay in May, were finally accepted by the Madras Congress in December 1927, moved, seconded and supported by Mohamed Ali, Mrs. Sarojini Naidu and Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar, Dr. Ansari being the President. Taken in mass, the Bombay and Calcutta resolutions embodied a judicious settlement of the constitutional as well as sentimental points at issue between the two leading communities in India. Having their origin in Delhi, the proposals were licked more and more into proper shape at Bombay and at Calcutta, and they acquired complete form at Madras. The meeting of the Muslim League at Calcutta passed a resolution in more or less the same terms as the Madras Congress resolution. The Indian National Liberal Federation also

adopted a similar resolution, though in less precise terms. Thus, for the first time after several years of helpless drifting apart, the two communities arrived at a comprehensive formula that gave ample promise of satisfying the predominant bulk of Indian opinion. How far even so-called "reactionary" Muslim opinion was satisfied with the terms of the Madras resolution, and how far in popular opinion Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar was associated with the triumph of its adoption by the Madras Congress, may be seen from the following words taken from a speech by Maulvi Muhammed Shafee in the Legislative Assembly on the 12th March 1929: "You (the Congress) drafted a resolution and got it passed unanimously in the All-India Congress Committee in May 1927, at Bombay, and in my Honourable friend's (Pandit Motilal's) absence, our friend Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar did his best to bring about harmony between the two communities in India during the time of his Congress Presidency. I should say that he succeeded to a very great extent, in bringing about a compromise and composing the differences at Calcutta in the All-India Congress Committee, and he was really crowned with success in his efforts in his own town of Madras, when he brought about unanimity and passed that resolution regarding Muslim and Hindu differences." If only Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar's meritorious work in connection with one major item of the Congress Constructive Programme—Hindu-Muslim unity—had been preserved, the Congress would not have alienated the sympathies of leaders like Mohamed Ali and Shaukat Ali, and in fact of the community itself. Unfortunately, it was not to be. Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar's one great legacy to the Congress and the country was frittered away, and is now almost forgotten, and we are witnessing during the past ten years the unedifying and dangerous spectacle of the two great communities—without whose co-operation Swaraj is an impossibility—fighting a prolonged and self-destroying war. But this is to anticipate—and let us revert to events in the year 1927.

We have already referred to the piquant situation created in Madras by the action of the Congress Party in implicitly disregarding the Gauhati mandate by keeping in office the

Subbarayan ministry. Sami Venkatachalam Chetty and Satyamurti directly, and Srinivasa Iyengar himself by necessary implication, were under fire in the Bombay meeting of the A.-I. C. C. from the more militant groups. The A.-I. C. C. had referred this matter to the Working Committee, which later gave a new interpretation to the Gauhati mandate—that it did not contemplate throwing out a ministry, thereby paving the way for another ministry that might prove a more staunch ally of the bureaucracy. But recrimination continued. There was an exchange of statements to the press between Srinivasa Iyengar and Prakasam. Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar's all-India reputation and his daemonic will that was determined to "do things and damn the consequences" were fast creating for him a number of enemies in his own province. Congressmen like R. K. Shunmukham Chetty (later our "ambassador" to Ottawa and in consequence now a 'Knight'), Muthiah Mudaliar (later a seceder from the Congress and a Minister under Subbarayan), and many smaller fry, aided and abetted by prominent non-Congressmen, raised the communalist bogey, and many hard things and essentially untrue things were said about Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar in the press and from the platform. Again, Mr. Iyengar had decided that it was no use contesting the Mayoral election on the Congress ticket, since the party as such was not in a majority in the Corporation. This was somehow interpreted to be a slur upon Sami Venkatachalam Chetty (who, if at all, should have contested the Mayoralty), and in several meetings all sorts of motives were attributed to Mr. Iyengar. But throughout he was whole-heartedly supported by Mr. Muthuranga Mudaliar (till recently the President of the Tamil Nadu Congress Committee). Undaunted and irrepressible, Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar held on to his predetermined course, realizing that duty should neither be elated by applause nor be sensitive to criticism.

Meanwhile there was other work to do. Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar had invited the Congress to Madras and the A.-I. C. C. had accepted the invitation. He had to attend to all the complicated minutiae in the arrangements for reception. A strong Reception Committee was formed, and Mr. Muthu-

ranga Mudaliar was elected as its Chairman. The colossal pandal near Spur Tank was rising. Dr. Ansari was the President-elect, appropriately enough chosen to symbolize the resolutions on Hindu-Muslim unity on the anvil of the Congress. As December approached, Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar's time and material resources were more and more exercised, and he did not stint them. It was later acknowledged in all quarters that Mr. Iyengar's labours were responsible in great measure for the unique success of the Congress.

Some mention must be made here of Srinivasa Iyengar's work in the Central Assembly in the autumn session of 1927. When the Reserve Bank Bill was under discussion, Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar tabled an amendment in which he made provision for the election of directors by Electoral Colleges; further, the maximum stock that could be held by any one should be Rs. 10,000 and each stock-holder should have only one vote irrespective of the stock held by him. This was accepted by Sir Basil Blackett, but owing to other differences between him and the Opposition, he decided finally not to proceed with the Bill. Again, when the Skeen Committee recommendations were under discussion, Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar moved this Resolution: "Subject to the revision of the whole scheme of the defence of the country in any future constitution for India acceptable to the people of India, and while feeling that the recommendations of the Indian Sandhurst Committee, specially relating to the continuance of British recruitment, do not satisfy Indian public opinion, this Assembly is of opinion that the acceptance of the unanimous recommendations of that Committee will mark a definite beginning in the Indianization of the Army in India, and it therefore recommends to the Governor-General in Council that he may be pleased to accept those recommendations and give immediate effect to them". In explaining his resolution, Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar pointed out that in another world-shaking war the entire British army may be withdrawn elsewhere and India may be cut off from England; it was no safe policy therefore to be eternally dependent on the lead of British Army officers. It was urgently necessary for Indians themselves to be trained in defending their country. The Commander-in-chief, Sir

William Birdwood, and Colonel Crawford wished to contest the points raised by Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar. However, after Mr. Jinnah had spoken in favour of the Resolution, Mr. Iyengar's resolution (in fact, it was an amendment to Dr. Moonje's resolution in less uncompromising terms) was declared carried without a division. In Pandit Motilal's absence, Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar had acted as the Leader of the Opposition during this session, and it was in this capacity that he had staged a walk-out with his followers when Sir Basil Blackett decided to postpone further consideration of the Reserve Bank Bill. Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar's leadership during this session was an unmistakable and pronounced success.

It is sometimes said that congressmen are prone to oppose all legislative restrictions on the freedom of the individual in all circumstances. Nothing can be further from the truth. Congressmen are not devoid of common sense to confuse liberty with license. When the Criminal Law Amendment Act, adding Section 295 (A) to the Indian Penal Code, was passed by the Central Legislatures in 1927, there was considerable opposition to the measure in the country. The important part of the Act read: "Whoever, with deliberate and malicious intention of outraging the religious feelings of any class of his Majesty's subjects, by words, either spoken or written, or by visible representations, insults or attempts to insult religion or religious beliefs of that class, shall be punished with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to two years, or with a fine, or with both". In an article that he contributed to the *Indian Review*, Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar pointed out that "the mere putting it (the Act) on the Statute Book will discharge the communal electricity to an appreciable extent and sensibly modify the atmosphere. . . . If we want Swaraj for India our religions require protection at the hands of the Swaraj State from extreme malicious attacks and insults. This ought to be one of the fundamental laws of the Swaraj State. There is no analogy whatever between this enactment and the whole armoury of repressive laws . . . whereby the present Government wants to perpetuate its reign and its powers, and prevents the freest and unrestricted fight for

Swaraj which is the inherent right of the Indian people to carry on". He also clearly showed how the Act could not affect *bona fide* comments or criticisms on a religion, and hence could not interfere with the freedom of the individual or of the press. This is a significant proof that even the whole-hogger congressman has an unflinching perception of the realities of normal life in a society. He knows the difference between laws framed for the good of the country and laws framed to perpetuate its slavery.

Notwithstanding the attacks repeatedly made against Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar's alleged "communalism", he was in reality the least communal of men and he honestly endeavoured, as far as it lay within his power, to bridge the widening chasm between the brahmin and the non-brahmin, and between the Hindu and the Muslim. His best supporters, as also his bitterest opponents, were non-brahmins. On the 18th November 1927, he issued a remarkable statement outlining his "proposals for solving the communal problems of South India." It may be remarked that it is not a formula that is required but a true change of heart. But a workable formula accepted and popularized by the accredited leaders of communities can in the long run trickle down to the masses and pave the way for a lasting understanding. Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar prefaced his proposals with the remarks: "An attempt must, I think, be made now to solve the outstanding differences as between the several Hindu castes in the Province of Madras . . . I make the following suggestions tentatively and only as a basis for discussion. I propose to interview representative members of all castes with a view to see whether any stable and lasting adjustment is feasible on these or other lines . . . In making these wholly tentative proposals I have kept in view the principle that politics and public life should unreservedly be secularized and that freedom and equality and justice are the pillars of nationalism, democracy and swaraj, which constitute our goal". The 'proposals' themselves were ranged under the headings, "General", "Services", "Social", "Legal" and "Religious", and are throughout characterized by a true broad-mindedness and catholicity of outlook. The actual wording of a proposal—in its minute particularity—may occasionally

raise a smile, but that is inevitable in documents of this nature. It was Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar's desire to convene a Unity Conference to thresh out this thorny question—just as he had already, and so successfully, threshed out contentious Hindu-Muslim problems in the Calcutta Unity Conference—and try to arrive at an authoritative settlement. But somehow it could not be done.

We now come to one of the most outstanding events in the year 1927—the appointment of the Simon Commission. As early as the 18th February, 1924, the Legislative Assembly had recommended to the Governor-General in Council "to summon at an early date a representative Round Table Conference to recommend, with due regard to the protection of the rights and interests of important minorities, the scheme of a constitution for India". A more elaborate resolution had been passed in September, 1925, recommending to the Government that necessary steps be taken to convene a Round Table Conference or "other suitable agency adequately representative of all Indian, European and Anglo-Indian interests". According to the Mont-Ford Act itself, a Statutory Commission was to have been appointed in 1929. But Indian public opinion pressed for an earlier Commission. For some time Lord Birkenhead merely poohpoohed the idea. Later he seemed to toy with the idea. Presently strange rumours reached India. The fear was expressed that the proposed Commission might be an all-white Commission. The leading Anglo-Indian paper, *The Statesman,* in the course of an editorial entitled 'Composing the Commission', judiciously remarked: "Why ignorance of India should be exalted into a qualification for settling the future of our Eastern Empire, long famed as the land of mystery, which does not yield its secrets easily, it is difficult to see . . . . We should have thought that it was elementary wisdom to invite Pandit Motilal Nehru, the titular Leader of the Opposition, to sit upon the Commission". Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, again, in the course of an interview, unambiguously pointed out that "if Lord Birkenhead means business and does not mean merely to feed us upon orations in the House of Lords . . . . it must be frankly recognised that it is the permanent interests of India that

are at stake and Indians have a natural and moral right to take part in the shaping of their constitution for the future". But Lord Birkenhead recked not. The authority of the British Parliament must be maintained at all costs. In order to prepare the ground suitably, Lord Irwin issued a number of invitations to Indian leaders—Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar included—to see him on the 5th November and the following days. Apparently, something was up! But when Mahatma Gandhi actually saw the Viceroy, and was merely shown the Secretary of State's announcement regarding the Simon Commission, "Gandhi felt that a one-anna envelope would have reached it to him. Lord Irwin was, however, helpless and was only doing a duty somewhat timidly and, therefore, canvassing the sympathies of politicians beforehand". Thus Dr. Pattabi,—with elegant and remorseless sarcasm. But Mr. Coatman, the official historian, puts it more dithyrambically: "In taking this step His Excellency was actuated by the desire to ensure that these gentlemen should be put in possession of full and accurate facts relating to the momentous decision taken by the Home Government in order that there might be no risk of their being taken by surprise and having to form their judgement on possibly misleading information". Anyhow, it was a gross miscalculation on the part of the Home Government and of Lord Irwin, who needlessly took so much trouble; for, in Mr. Coatman's *naive* language, the "reception of the announcement (on the 8th November) . . . was somewhat extraordinary, for immediately the leaders of the extreme left and the extreme right of Indian politics joined hands in denouncing the constitution of the Commission and its procedure and advocating a boycott".

The Commission consisted of four Conservatives, two Labourites, and one Liberal, Sir John Simon, who was also the Chairman. The Commission was to visit India twice and to be assisted by select committees representing the various legislatures—committees that would in effect be merely meaningless appendages, without an iota of real power to influence the decisions of the Commission. After all, it was Lord Birkenhead's one great gift to India. In an instant all parties in India—and all the leaders of note—spoke with one

voice, a fact which even the official historian has regretfully to record. Congressmen, Liberals, Muslim Leaguers, all agreed in denouncing the Commission. Mr. Arthur Moore stated that he "should have preferred a mixed Commission, and my impression is that a majority of unofficial English agree with me". Mr. S. Srinivasa Iyengar declared: "We should be wanting in elementary self-respect if we thought for a moment of co-operating either by giving evidence or by going to the Select Committees". At the time of the Madras Congress, again, Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar moved the important resolution on the boycott of the Simon Commission. It called upon the people of India and all Congress bodies "to organize mass demonstrations on the day of the arrival of the Commission in India or cities of India which the Commission may visit" and called upon "the non-official members of the legislatures not to attend meetings of the legislatures except for the purpose of preventing their seats being declared vacant, or for the purpose of making the boycott effective and successful". Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar made a spirited speech in moving the resolution and it was adopted by the Congress. Similar, if less downright, resolutions were passed by the Liberal Federation, the Muslim League and the Hindu Maha Sabha. The blindest eye could see now that the Simon Commission was not wanted by any intelligent section of Indian opinion.

When announcing the appointment of the Simon Commission in the House of Lords, the Earl of Birkenhead had truculently observed: "I have twice in the three years during which I have been Secretary of State invited our critics in India to put forward their own suggestions for a Constitution, to indicate to us the form which in their judgement any reform of the Constitution should take. That offer is still open . . . But let it be plainly said—it cannot be too plainly said—that Parliament cannot, and will not, repudiate its own responsibility, in this matter". The gist of that speech was that Indians were at liberty to frame their own 'constitutions' to be treated by his Lordship strictly as mere 'scraps of paper.' There was the further challenge that Indians could never agree among themselves to be able to produce, even in broad outlines, a constitution for Swaraj India.

This challenge the Congress decided to take up. In fact, even before the appointment of the Simon Commission, the A.-I. C. C. had passed a resolution at its May session in Bombay—"The A.-I. C. C. calls upon the Working Committee to frame a Swaraj Constitution, based upon a Declaration of Rights, for India, in consultation with the elected members of the central and provincial legislatures and other leaders of political parties, and place the same before a special meeting of the A.-I. C. C. with a view to its adoption by the Congress at its next session". Though a great deal had been done in evolving a satisfactory formula in regard to Hindu-Muslim differences, a Constitution itself had not been framed. No doubt, eminent constitutional pundits like C. Vijiaraghavachari, Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, A. Rangaswami Iyengar, Sir P. S. Sivaswami Iyer and S. Srinivasa Iyengar had either prepared complete drafts for a Swaraj Constitution or thrown out useful hints in that connection; but no draft had as yet any wide currency or commanded universal approval. Hence the Madras Congress passed another resolution: "Having regard to the general desire of all political parties in the country to unite together in settling a Swaraj Constitution, and having considered the various drafts submitted to it and the various suggestions received in reply to the Working Committee's circular, this Congress authorizes the Working Committee, which shall have power to co-opt, to confer with similar Committees to be appointed by other organizations—political, labour, commercial, communal—in the country and to draft a Swaraj Constitution for India on the basis of a Declaration of Rights, and to place the same for consideration and approval before a special convention to be convened in Delhi not later than March next, consisting of the All-India Congress Committee and the leaders and representatives of the other organizations above mentioned and the elected members of the central and provincial legislatures." Dr. Ansari, the Congress President, was also to become the President of the All-Parties Conference envisaged in the above resolution.

A reference should be made in this connection to Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar's personal contribution to this huge national problem. About a fortnight before the Madras

Congress, Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar published his *Swaraj Constitution,* containing his own draft as well as an illuminating commentary on the principles of constitution-making for India. He begins by saying that "in framing a Swaraj Constitution for India one must keep in mind certain general principles." These are that, firstly, "we cannot surrender our right of self-determination", that, secondly, "the constitution need not necessarily be framed on the lines of fullest national independence...If our demand is rejected, fullest national independence should be our goal, and must therefore be expressly reserved in the constitution", and that, thirdly, "we must proceed to frame it on the model of the constitutions of western democracies." The next question discussed is whether the constitution should be of the federal or unitary type. Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar unhesitatingly elects the federal type, for which he claims several advantages. The first is that a federal system alone can satisfactorily accommodate the Indian States. Another important reason advanced by Mr. Iyengar is that "any dominant caucus, communal, political or dynastic, ruling the Central Government of a Swaraj India will be able to disturb the equipoise more easily in a unitary system than in a federal system and might bring about the impairment or destruction of Swaraj, as the history of mediaeval governments in India illustrates." And, perhaps, the most clinching reason adduced by the author is that "a Federal Democracy is a much better safeguard against the springing up of ambitious oligarchies, commercial or militarist." Finally, Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar justifies his preference for the federal system on the score of its greater adaptability to the unique peculiarities of Indian culture. "The Eastern conception of Law as above the Sovereign, of Dharma as above the King, has made indigenous Indian and Chinese institutions democratic in operation, though autocratic in form...Therefore either a secular democracy with fullest regional autonomy or the autocracy of a self-controlled King, above whom Dharma shines like a star, has alone suited the psychology of India in particular...The latter is impossible to our modern minds and the former is therefore the only alternative. A Federal Democracy, therefore, is to India, with its immense dis-

tances, and to the Indian mind with its sensitiveness, a far better expression of justice, and will therefore be far more successful than a unitary democracy with dependent provincial councils." However, he would prefer the qualified federalism of Canada to the absolute federalism of U. S. A.

As is only to be expected, Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar is opposed to nominations to legislatures, to communal electorates, and to special electorates. Regarding the futility and the wholly poisonous nature of separate electorates, he persuasively writes: "The mistrust of one another which finds expression in a separate electorate is a mistrust of the common legislative body itself. Confucius said: 'If you mistrust a man, do not employ him; if you employ a man, do not mistrust him.' And that saying might well apply to those who mistrust their fellow members belonging to the other communities, and they must not therefore enter the councils. On the one hand, a common electorate compels all the communities to co-operate together and eliminates the extremist who will exploit the communal differences. On the other hand, a candidate belonging to the majority community and competing with other members of his own community, desires to secure the vote of the minority community and becomes more humanized in the process." If minorities are still diffident of their position, Mr. Iyengar would recommend reservation of seats or the single transferable vote or the cumulative vote or the list system as a "safer method than the crude and disruptive one of separate electorates."

Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar is in favour of the redistribution of India on a linguistic basis, since that is "the safest for the proper functioning of Indian democracies, and for the minimizing of inter-communal friction." The central legislature should be bicameral but, says Mr. Iyengar, a two-chamber council in a province is neither necessary nor useful. "I have, however, little doubt that the British Government will seek to force it upon the provinces in India"—a prophecy that was to be painfully fulfilled ten years hence!

As regards the position of the Army and Navy *vis-a-vis* the Swaraj government, Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar indignantly repudiates Lord Birkenhead's insinuations that India will be

helpless without the British Army and Navy and the British elements in the Civil Service. He feels, too, that the salaries paid to the accredited servants of the State are far too high. "It must be a fundamental rule that no office or place in British India shall carry with it a salary exceeding Rs. 2000 a month. If Indians demand that their maximum salary should be reduced to Rs. 2000 a month what a powerful Swaraj lever it would be!" Five years later, the Karachi Congress was to go one better than that and fix Rs. 500 per month as the maximum salary in Congress Raj—and indeed this has become a powerful lever to sway the popular feelings.

There is not space enough here to refer in detail to Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar's draft constitution or to the other points raised and brilliantly dealt with in the Introduction. It is sufficient to point out that it fully and minutely reveals a trained and astute intellect grappling with the many-sided complications of constitution-making. Its citations are many and varied and range from the hoary Upanishads and the Edicts of Asoka to the Constitution Acts of almost all the democratic countries in the world. The eminent constitutional lawyer, the fervent patriot and apostle of independence for India and the seasoned and constructive statesman, all are equally evident in this work.

Two more matters pertaining to the Madras Congress must be here referred to. One is the change in the creed of the Congress. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, who had enhanced an already considerable reputation by his pronouncements in Europe and especially at the Congress of Oppressed Nationalities held at Brussels, moved a resolution that "This Congress declares the goal of the Indian people to be complete National Independence." This proposition had been debated on the Congress forum ever so often and had been scotched every time either by the authoritarian voice of Mahatma Gandhi or of one of his authorized and immediate *chelas*. This had happened even in the Gauhati session. In Madras, however, Mahatma Gandhi was indifferent and did not care to participate in the discussion. The announcement of the Simon Commission had completely electrified the atmosphere and it had to explode in some immediately

specific act. Hence the majority of the delegates gladly plumped for independence. Even Mrs. Annie Beasant had to agree that it was a manly and unequivocal statement of India's goal. It was left to Mr. Vijiaraghavachari to oppose the resolution, and this led to an unseemly exchange of retorts between him and the youthful mover. On this occasion Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar made an effective speech and committed himself henceforth to independence only as the goal of India.

Secondly, the success of the Madras Congress financially was something that was more than creditable. After all expenses incurred in its conduct had been deducted, nearly a lakh of rupees remained from collections in respect of the sale of delegates' and visitors' tickets. It was decided to utilize this money for constructing a building to serve as a centre of Congress activities in South India. 'Congress House,' as the building is now called, is an imposing structure on the Royapettah High Road and has been the Congress Headquarters for about eight years. Somehow or other this building is associated in the public mind with Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar. When the Congress House was formally opened, Mr. Vijiaraghavachari generously and gratefully referred to Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar's wise leadership in 1927 that enabled Madras to possess an excellent and enviable Head Quarters for its Congress activities.

Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar's term of Congress Presidency was thus distinguished by all-round activities and a singularly wise and seasoned leadeship. Like Atlas he bore—or practically bore—on his broad shoulders the whole brunt of the Congress organization in Tamil Nadu and in the city of Madras; and besides he was one of the most respected leaders in India. That his election to the Presidency in 1926 was no mere fluke but was merely the result of a recognition of his undoubted abilities and sacrifices can be seen from the fact that, after a year's leadership, the Madras Congress again elected him as a member of the Working Committee, only Gandhi and Motilal Nehru obtaining more votes than he did. For the time being, at any rate, Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar was thought to and did speak for Madras. No leader previously had so completely stirred the imagination

of the people of Madras and of Tamil Nadu. Others—it would be invidious to name them here—and even the most outstanding amongst them had been either precise intellectuals appealing to the few or mere propagandists that played the stentor and exploited the people's prejudices. Hence, one and all of them,—patriots, communalists, self-less non-co-operators, intellectuals, who not—either did not reach the masses or could not preserve their popularity for long. The non-brahmin movement had cast a blight over all the nationalist elements in the population. The remnants of the great non-cooperators were either heroically loyal to their chief by their self-immolation or had strayed into curiously diverting paths of innocuous endeavour or the dangerous ruts of irreligion or reaction. Madras, ever a byword for its slave-mentality (by no means and never a really justifiable reproach), was now looked down upon for not merely working Dyarchy but for actually glorying in it. The 'sane' achievements of the Justice Party again and again figured prominently in official pronouncements and in the pages of the annual statements on India prepared by Prof. Rushbrook-Williams and later by Mr. Coatman. It was Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar's individual achievement to have brought order out of the chaos of the nationalist forces in Madras, to have routed the Justice Party at the polls, to have carried the message of the Indian National Congress to the remotest hamlet in South India, to have made the demand for Swaraj an intellectual as well as an emotional proposition, and finally to have demanded and obtained for Madras an honourable place on the map of India. When Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar was in Calcutta in 1927, Mr. Sen Gupta, the Mayor, in the course of a felicitous speech, acknowledged the fact that it was then the proud privilege of Madras to lead even Calcutta, that had so long been in the vanguard of Indian nationalism. Mr. Sen Gupta mentioned the names of Sir C. V. Raman, Professor Radhakrishnan and Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar himself, and confessed that in Science, in Philosophy and in Politics, Madras nobly led the way.

At this distance of time it is not quite possible to recapitulate what a power Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar was in the Madras of 1927. Undergraduates eagerly conning the

columns of the newspapers for items of news about the 'Leader'; the masses reverently and affectionately talking of 'Sriman'; children in aristocratic homes and street urchins shouting excitedly 'Srinivasa Iyengar-ki Jai'; the advocates of Madras returning him to the Bar Council with the largest number of votes; the mighty leaders from the North, inspite of themselves, paying their homage to the astute and masterful leader from the South; the youthful firebrands themselves, a Pandit Jawaharlal, a Subhas Chandra Bose, finding in him an unquestioned leader . . . it is thus one should picture the phenomenon that Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar was in the meridian of his political career. It is undeniable, too, that Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar, more than any single person, was first responsible for organizing Congress activities in Madras as effective instruments for mobilizing public opinion.

CHAPTER III

AFTERMATH

The Madras Congress was over. The Congress Working Committee was now engaged on two stupendous enterprises. One of these, the effective boycott of the Simon Commission, was a purely destructive enterprise. On the contrary, the other, the drafting of a Swaraj Constitution for India, was an arduous but constructive enterprise. But a month's brief respite was given to all. In January 1928 the Indian atmosphere was gradually being charged with political electricity. But there were no explosions—as yet. The ominous calm before the storm!

According to the terms of the Madras Resolution, congressmen were not to attend the sessions of the legislature except (among other things) "for the purpose of making the boycott effective". The Congress members of the central Legislatures were therefore assembled in Delhi, though not in order to attend the sessions regularly. Lord Irwin addressed a joint session of the Central Legislatures on the 2nd February and appealed for co-operation with the Simon Commission. The speech was an admirable illustration of the age-long British policy of hiding the mailed fist beneath the velvet glove. Alluding to the non-cooperators, His Excellency permitted himself the luxury of looking into the future: "I dare predict that the searching inquest of history will not fail to return judgement against those who sought to use their power to hinder when it was in their power to help." Regarding Indian co-operation, His Excellency made it categorically clear that the Commission "will carry through their enquiry with, it is hoped, the generous assistance of all shades of Indian opinion. But whether such assistance is offered or withheld, the enquiry will proceed, and a report will be presented to Parliament on which Parliament will take whatever action it deems appropriate." Yes; if the Cæsars in Indian political life would not give evidence, there are mute, inglorious nonentities who will give, and on its basis the Report will be presented, and thus

would British prestige be maintained! The next day the Simon Commission landed in Bombay. There was a spontaneous all-India hartal. The hartal in Madras led to the police firing at a crowd in front of the High Court, resulting in some casualties. According to Mr. Coatman, the police *had to open fire* "in order to save the building and persons inside it"; but according to Dr. Pattabi, the firing was "unfortunate" and "perhaps avoidable". Students particularly were everywhere enthusiastic in observing the hartal.

It remained still to pass a formal boycott resolution in the Legislative Assembly. On the 16th February, Lala Lajpat Rai moved the resolution "that the constitution and scheme of the Commission were wholly unacceptable to the Assembly which should have nothing to do with it, at any stage or in any form." After Lalaji had moved his resolution, making special emphasis on the ignorance of the members of the Commission with regard to things Indian and questioning the *bona fides* of the British Government, Sir Zulfiqar Ali Khan moved a counter resolution accepting the Commission. Sir James Crerar, the Home Member, spoke against Lalaji's resolution. He was followed by Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar who elaborated the point that the Commission was a deliberate affront to the Indian people. India had rightly and properly taken up the challenge and brought about a unanimous boycott of the Commission. (It is said that not one of the 22 knights of the city of Bombay had bothered to welcome the Commission to that city.) Talk of safeguarding the interests of the minorities was mere camouflage. In truth, the Government wished to protect the interests only of the European community in India and its commercial operations. And hence he would vote for the boycott resolution. Sir Darcy Lindsay, the leader of the European group, Mr. Shah Nawaz, Mr. M. C. Raja and Mr. Nawaz Khan were all for co-operation. Mr. Jinnah and Pandit Motilal Nehru, of course, vehemently repudiated the unwanted Commission. In the end, the motion was declared carried by 68 votes to 62—a 3 to 1 majority when only the elected members are taken into account. The verdict of the Assembly made it quite explicit that India did not want Simon and his

crew to examine India and prescribe gratuitous remedies for her healthy growth. But it was useless trying to make the Government realize the utter falsity of its position. It felt complacent and virtuous when the Council of State, with its majority of nominated members, passed an orthodox resolution by 34 votes to 13. As the Assembly had refused to elect members to the Joint Committee, nomination had to be resorted to. Sir Sankaran Nair had the dubious honour of being the Chairman of the Joint Committee and Sir Hari Singh Gour was another of its enthusiastic members. Like an uncomfortable and heavy appendage, the Nair Committee did its strange doings under the shadow of the Simon Commission, and both ultimately terminated their futile labours unnoticed and unhonoured. When the Simon Commission visited Madras a second time, Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar himself led the mammoth demonstration against it along the main thoroughfares of Madras, and he and Mr. T. Prakasam addressed a mass meeting at the very time the Mayor of the Corporation, Mr. A. Ramaswami Mudaliar, was receiving the Simon Commission.

To turn now to the congressional experiments on the constructive mechanics of constitution-making for Swaraj India: early in the new year the Congress Working Committee issued invitations to a large number of political, communal, labour and other organizations. The varied representatives, along with the A.-I. C. C., constituted the All Parties Conference that held its first meeting on the 12th February 1928, at Delhi, under the presidency of Dr. Ansari. The first fork on the road was the issue between Dominion Status and Complete Independence. For the time being a way out of the difficulty was found by resolving that "the Constitution to be framed should provide for the establishment of full responsible government". So far so good; but immediately there were difficulties. The Muslim League and the Hindu Maha Sabha were sharply divided on two issues: the creation of two additional provinces, Sind and the N. W. F., both predominantly Muslim, and the reservation of seats on a population basis for the Muslim majorities in Bengal and in the Punjab. It may be remembered that the Bombay A.-I. C. C., in May 1927, and the

Madras Congress had conceded both these Muslim points, and on that score the Madras resolution on Hindu-Muslim unity had been endorsed by the Calcutta meeting of the Muslim League. When the All Parties Conference tried to reopen the question once again, due to pressure from the Hindu and Sikh representatives, the Muslims smelt a rat and expressed their strong disapproval of the resolutions passed by the Conference. Sub-Committees of the All Parties Conference were formed and functioned half-heartedly. February, March and April passed, and the little rift was perceptibly and alarmingly widening. The All Parties Conference met again on the 19th May in Bombay with gloomy forebodings as to its future work. Finally it managed to pass this resolution: "This meeting resolves that a committee consisting of Motilal Nehru (Chairman), Tej Bahadur Sapru, Ali Imam, G. R. Pradhan, Subhas Chandra Bose, M. S. Aney, M. R. Jayakar, N. M. Joshi, Sardar Mangal Singh, Shuaib Qureshi be appointed to consider and determine the principles of the Constitution for India before 1st July next." The Nehru Committee, as it came to be called hereafter, was asked to give "the fullest consideration" to the Madras Congress resolution on Communal Unity as also other resolutions of important organizations. To thresh out the Communal problem, informal conferences of prominent leaders, Hindu and Muslim,—Jinnah and Moonje were both absent—were held on the 7th and 8th July. The conference finally came to the conclusion that "reservation of seats for small minorities in proportion to their population, with the right to contest additional seats, should be permitted in provincial legislatures" and also in the central legislature. This was embodied in the Nehru report. In two respects this differed materially from the Madras resolution: non-reservation of seats for majorities "for the present, and if desired" and refusal to give weightage to the minorities in the various provincial and central legislatures. "The right to contest additional seats" was put in lieu of weightage; but Muslim opinion, led by Jinnah, the Ali Brothers and the Muslim League itself, felt itself betrayed, and immediately demanded separate electorates only *and* one third representation in the central Legislature. From now onwards Hindu-Muslim unity

was doomed, and the Nehru Report, too, was doomed even in anticipation. Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar's great work had been entirely frittered away.

After the Delhi session of the Assembly was over, Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar left India on a European tour. When in England he addressed a meeting of the members of the Parliament and elaborated India's case for Indian independence. Further, he took that opportunity for re-founding the London Branch of the Indian National Congress that had been thoughtlessly abolished during the first non-cooperation movement. He quickly familiarized himself with the intricateness of European affairs and also paid a visit to Soviet Russia in order to observe communism in action. Belgium, Holland, Denmark, these were small nations, perhaps no bigger than a district or two in India,—but they were independent, and proud to be so, and not afraid to be so. Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar made up his mind that he could never reconcile himself to mere dominion status for India, whatever may be its unsung advantages and untold privileges. Again, the great experiment in Russia, where a wretched and impoverished peasantry—so similar to the Indian peasantry—was heroically engaged in a colossal experiment, could not but make a lasting impression on Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar's sensitive mind. Inevitably he gravitated towards socialism.

In the meantime the Nehru Committee had concluded its labours. The Report itself was published about the middle of August 1928 and was received most favourably by the nationalist sections of the press. But the Muslims vehemently denounced the Report, especially its recommendations on communal representation. However, the All Parties Conference met in Lucknow in the last week of August to consider the Report. Several ex-members of the various Executive Councils were present as well as representatives of the big land-owners. An indiscreet reference by Pandit Jawaharlal to the latter led to the Conference adopting the resolution that "all titles to private and personal property lawfully acquired and enjoyed at the establishment of the Commonwealth are hereby guaranteed". The Conference also gave freedom of action to those whose objective was

independence and not dominion status. But it seemed that it was almost unnecessary.

It was at this juncture that Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar returned to India. There was a royal reception by the citizens of Madras. It was the apotheosis of Mr. Iyengar's reputation and hold over the people. Soon after he had landed, he issued a statement, repudiating dominion status and hence by implication the Nehru Report itself. Immediately the independence-wallahs organized themselves and made themselves articulate. The fact was that the two outstanding exponents of independence besides Srinivasa Iyengar—viz. Jawaharlal Nehru and Subhas Chandra Bose—had both been placed in a false position with regard to the Nehru Report. Subhas had been himself a member of the Committee and Jawaharlal as good as one. They asserted that dominion status was not the logical goal—but yet refrained from openly raising the rebellion within the Congress. Srinivasa Iyengar, however, was unimplicated directly with the Nehru Report and could therefore legitimately take his stand on the Madras Congress resolution. He quickly converted Satyamurti to independence and his stentorian voice was harnessed for the furtherance of the gospel of complete independence. *The Hindu* with careful circumlocution tried to make Srinivasa Iyengar's campaign nugatory—but with no success. Srinivasa Iyengar attended the Delhi meeting of the A.-I. C. C. in November, and proclaimed the rebellion, supported by Jawaharlal Nehru, Subhas Chandra Bose, Jamnadas Mehta and Satyamurti. There was a passage at arms between Lala Lajpat Rai and Srinivasa Iyengar. In the end a resolution was adopted by the A.-I. C. C. that reiterated independence only as the goal of India while endorsing the proposals of the Nehru Report regarding Communal Representation, and generally expressing the opinion that the Nehru Constitutional proposals were a great step in political advance. It was in effect a triumph for Srinivasa Iyengar and his followers. They now formed a new organization, the Independence of India League, within the Congress itself, to work for independence only. Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar was elected Chairman and Messrs.

Jawaharlal Nehru and Subhas Chandra Bose became Secretaries of the League.

During the discussions in Delhi, the question had been raised whether an independence-wallah could or could not take the oath of allegiance to the Crown as a member of any of the legislatures. In reply Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar had stated that the objection was more apparent than real, and had referred to the fact that De Valera and his followers, while pledged to complete independence, did not mind taking the oath of allegiance. Finally, Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar had stated, "Above all there is the head of mental reservation." This harmless phrase was the target of a virulent attack by Lala Lajpat Rai, shortly after the Delhi session. In effect it accused Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar of advocating dishonesty and insincerity in political life. In his manly and dignified reply, Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar not merely met all Lalaji's points but contented himself with the observation that men far greater than himself, Gandhi and Motilal, had similarly been victims of misrepresentations, and he should therefore wisely ignore it. Besides Lalaji, far lesser men in the South also enjoyed the petty pastime of referring mischievously to that 'mental reservation' episode in all sorts of connections. Of course, Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar's withers were unwrung and he triumphantly lived down the sly insinuations.

Meanwhile, supporters of the Nehru Report were leaving no stone unturned to make the people accept its recommendations. Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru was touring the South singing the praises of the Report. Miniature All Parties Conferences were being held all over the country—the one in Madras being inspired by the venerable personality of Dr. Besant. Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar refused to have anything to do with this Conference. It however passed a pious resolution hoping that the country would stand by the Nehru Report.

We shall now chronicle the events that have made the Calcutta Congress of December 1928 a memorable and momentous session in the annals of Indian national evolution. Pandit Motilal Nehru was the President-elect, and a difficult task faced him. He could neither repudiate the Congress and its Madras resolution on independence nor

could he repudiate his own Report, with its acceptance of dominion status. The timid and prudent elements that rallied round the Report were strong in numbers, but the youthful and impatient idealists who swore by independence were almost equally strong. The hypnotic reputation of Gandhi would perceptibly decide the issue—if only he could be persuaded to intervene! Mahatmaji agreed to do so—and immediately the dice was heavily loaded against the independence-wallahs. Pandit Motilal's address attempted to answer the three questions: Where do we stand? What is our goal? How shall we reach it? The second was the really disputatious question. Yes, said Pandit Motilal, he was for independence, as full and absolute as it can be; but, added he, he was not against dominion status, if it was conceded by the British before all attraction for it had quite vanished. Thus, it was a question of the time when and the manner in which dominion status was offered to Indians.

Presently the Working Committee wished to tackle the problem. Srinivasa Iyengar and Mahatma Gandhi put their heads together to evolve an honourable compromise. A split was sought to be avoided at any cost. It was at last agreed that the Congress would adopt the Nehru Report if it was accepted in its entirety within one year by the British Government; else the Congress would stand for independence and that only. The Compromise Resolution was moved by Mahatma Gandhi and seconded by Srinivasa Iyengar in the Subjects Committee, and was passed by a majority. Jawaharlal Nehru and Subhas Chandra Bose soon backed out of the Compromise and decided to move amendments, affirming independence only as the objective of the Congress, in the open session. Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar, however, was bound by his word of honour to accept the Compromise. In the open Congress, Mahatmaji's Compromise resolution was seconded by Dr. Ansari, and Subhas Chandra Bose's amendment was seconded by Pandit Jawaharlal. That these two youthful leaders had wriggled out of their earlier commitments to stand by the Compromise was very much resented by Mahatma Gandhi when he moved the official resolution. The crucial portion of this resolution was: "Subject to the exigencies of the political situation, this Congress will adopt

the Constitution (as embodied in the Nehru Report) if it is accepted in its entirety by the British Parliament on or before the 31st December, 1929, but in the event of its non-acceptance by that date or its earlier rejection, the Congress will organize a campaign of non-violent non-cooperation by advising the country to refuse taxation and in such other manner as may be decided upon. Consistently with the above, nothing in this resolution shall interfere with the carrying on in the name of the Congress of the propaganda for Complete Independence." The independence-wallahs were represented in the Working Committee by Srinivasa Iyengar, Subhas Chandra Bose and Jawaharlal Nehru, though they preserved the Independence of India League as well to function as an effective left wing within the Congress fold. In his concluding speech, Pandit Motilal Nehru thanked the delegates for their co-operation and described Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar as a fullgrown bullock that had cut out its horns in order to comport with the frolicksome calves in the Independence League.

Simultaneously the All Parties' Convention also was holding its colourful sittings in Calcutta. Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar made a statement on behalf of the members of the Independence of India League dissociating himself and his party from the active deliberations of the Convention. Yet the Convention persisted. More and more Muslim opinion ranged itself dead against the Nehru Report. Mr. Jinnah and the Aga Khan declared themselves opposed to the Report—its principles and its recommendations. Mr. Chintamani made a good speech. Mahomed Ali tried to alter a clause here and another there—but with no success; and in despair he too joined the ranks of the detractors of the Report. "The All Parties' Convention," to quote Dr. Pattabi, "was really lying in Calcutta on its sick-bed, one might say, on its death-bed. The longer it lived, the more numerous became the demands of the poor relations that gathered round it. Like the calf at Sabarmati, it could not live but would not die. It was therefore necessary to smoothen its way to heaven. Who else could have the courage to do this last act of service to the dying friend than Gandhi? His shoulders are broad enough to bear the obloquy of doing to death the

Convention. He moved that the Convention do adjourn *sine die*, and the motion was passed." That was the unfortunate, but perhaps not unmerited, end of the All Parties' Convention. Having achieved these two things—Compromise in the Congress and the death of the Convention—Gandhi awaited developments. How was the Government going to react to the Congress ultimatum?

Meanwhile affairs in Madras were assuming a puzzling and indeed a repulsive pattern. The Independent Ministry composed of Subbarayan, Ranganatha Mudaliar and Arokiasamy proved too independent of one another, and the two latter ministers resigned. There were mysterious confabulations between some congressmen, Dr. Subbarayan and the leader of the Justice Party. There was also a vacancy for the Law Membership of the Madras Executive Council,—Mr. T. R. Venkatarama Sastri having resigned that high office as a protest against an invidious reshufflement of portfolios. Another shift of the political kaleidoscope—and a lurid image made itself visible. Mr. Krishnan Nair, a leader of the Justice Party, became an Executive Councillor; Messrs. Muthiah Mudaliar and Sethuratnam Iyer, two congressmen, became Dr. Subbarayan's colleagues. Was the alluring gift of the Goddess Lakshmi to be spurned? No, no,—it was the chance of a life-time!

Further, congressmen in Madras could not escape the irresistible fascination of office—at any rate in the depths of the unconscious. Of course, Srinivasa Iyengar, Muthuranga Mudaliar, Bashyam,—these among others were, like Cæsar's wife, quite above suspicion. But the people—even in 1928 and 1929—wished the Congress to take office and keep out the Justice Party from power. There are moments when a wise leader should be willing to be led. Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar came to the conclusion that a slight re-orientation in Congress policy was necessary—at any rate in the Madras Presidency. Not all the leaders need enter the Councils; he himself would be out of it. But obstruction within the legislatures had been futile. "The Assembly is not the place, much less the Councils, to which you can look for a policy of obstruction by the nation"—thus he had categorically declared. Why not allow some of the congressmen to

try ministerships under the effective jurisdiction of the Congress? Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar had no faith in rigidly adhering to a uniform policy in all the Provinces. It was only another steel-frame like the bureaucracy—and must prove ultimately equally obnoxious. An exponent of true 'federal democracy', he was for giving more freedom of action to the Provinces. This seemed to him the only way of consolidating the power of the Congress in Madras. Accordingly, he took great pains to explain his views before the Congress Working Committee. But the Committee was not convinced; Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar was not allowed to hold out the promise of even a consideration of office acceptance before his followers in Tamil Nadu.

Mr. Vallabhbhai Patel had gone over to Madras about this time to preside over the Provincial Political Conference. Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar, who opened the Conference, drew a picture of his "dream of linked leadership" which had indeed been hinted at even in his Gauhati presidential address. Again, it was an assertion of an unflinching federalism in the very constitution of the Congress itself. Unity should not be beaten down to the level of dead uniformity. In minor matters the problems of Madras may happen to be different from the problems of the Punjab or of the U. P. Hence it should be a healthy convention with the Congress to distinguish between primary things of all-India importance and between purely provincial matters. Village leaders, district leaders, and provincial leaders should not degenerate to the position of helpless automata, carrying out the mechanical impulsions of the congressional powers that be. They also serve who in humbler spheres serve and sacrifice. After explaining his views on 'linked leadership', Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar again reiterated his faith in independence and exhorted the Conference also to declare for that unalterable goal. In the discussions that followed, both Rajagopalachari and Rangaswami Iyengar spoke in favour of dominion status and the Conference itself took the same view. Mr. Vallabhbhai Patel, however, paid a glorious tribute to the determined work that Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar had done in considerably furthering the national cause.

From Madras to the imperial grandeurs of New Delhi:

the budget session of the Legislative Assembly was sitting. Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar was ever one of the toughest debaters in the house, but of late he had also developed an uncanny flair for suggestion, for hitting the nail on the head and sparing the finger, and sometimes for not blushing to call a spade a spade and even double and treble spade it into the bargain. His head and his heart had learnt to work in admirable harmony and thereby to discomfit his opponents. On the 12th March 1929, for instance, the Assembly was debating on Pandit Motilal's proposition: "That the demand under the head 'Executive Council' be reduced to one rupee." Pandit Motilal's plea was that the Government had callously refused to take steps to concede the National Demand. Unfortunately, he had referred to the Nehru Report and had claimed for it more universal approval in the country than was actually the case. This put the Muslims on their guard. Every speaker began to refer to the Nehru Report—some like Jinnah, Mahomed Yakub and Maulvi Muhammed Shafi to repudiate it, others like Pandit Malaviya, J. K. Munshi and Bhargava to defend it. Again and again, to the President's obvious embarrassment, the discussion took the complexion of a debate on the Nehru Report. Mr. Jinnah deliberately announced: "I think I should make it clear—and here again I do so with all responsibility—that the Nehru Report, speaking now on behalf of the Muslims, is nothing more than a Hindu counter-proposal to the Muslim proposals which were made in 1927 (embodied in the Madras Congress resolution), as far as the communal question is concerned. It has not been accepted by the Mussalmans." Pandit Motilal interrupted Jinnah and there was a continuous verbal passage at arms. Excepting for Jayakar, not one would leave the already dead Nehru Report alone. It was even felt doubtful whether the Opposition would be able to carry the day. At this crucial stage in the discussion, Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar decided to intervene, and he made one of the best speeches ever delivered on the floor of the Assembly. A series of simple sentences—in little, natural jerks and uneasy transitions, surprising and ultimately satisfying—and the twin strains of thought in his mind—condemnation of the Treasury Benches

and pacification and gradual annexation of Muslim sentiment—were apparently artlessly made manifest, and an entirely new atmosphere in the Assembly resulted. "Why should we not strive for independence?" he flared up; "there are some people who have been given a brief time-limit, and who think they will strive for independence after the 1st January 1930. For myself, my duty is clearly to strive for independence only today and tomorrow and all the time, as far as I can . . . ." Then followed a passage in which sarcasm and humour were cleverly blended: "If I understood anything—and I have during the last year added a European qualification and therefore I can speak with first-hand knowledge of the business capacity of Englishmen—it is their capacity for business that is remarkable. But they consider us very unbusinesslike people; they consider we are children, and that we should be treated as such, and that we may be made political dupes of—I am perfectly certain of that. I am sorry to see that perhaps willingly or unwillingly there are still some dupes—I do not say in this House—I do not know—outside or hereafter there may be some dupes. (Laughter) But the dupes are on the other side, not on our side, Sir. (Laughter) And I say to myself that even when I talk of independence, I consider myself to be a very moderate person, because I know the real feeling in the country is very much stronger than the feeling that I am able to express here, with all the limitations of courtesy and politeness . . . We have to be charming people all the while we talk here, while at the same time demanding complete Swaraj." Those deceptive qualifications—and yet in spite of all those involutions, the arraignment is direct and terrible. It is the style of Disraeli, in his most impish and devastating mood.

He then referred to the completeness of the boycott of the Simon Commission, and continued: "Therefore, Sir, this persistence in the Simon Commission is itself, to my mind, tantamount to the non-acceptance of the Resolution of the Calcutta Congress, and I consider also that the Viceroy's speech—some of my friends may differ from me—is also a non-acceptance, because it says, 'Within this time what can we do?', as if anything is going to be done by making the

one year of the Congress 5 years or 3 years or 2 years!" Wise words, and words justified by the verdict of the future. More than *eight* years were to elapse before even truncated Provincial Autonomy could be introduced in the terms of the Government of India Act of 1935! The speech was a prophetic screech of disgust at the tactics of the Government.

It was then necessary to put the Muslim members at ease about the All-Parties Constitution (Nehru Report), and Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar nonchalantly proceeded: "Is it contended by anyone that the All-Parties Constitution is the last word on the subject? Do you mean to say that we cannot scrap the All-Parties Constitution and arrive at another Constitution? Why should we, in the presence of the dissenting members and others, who take a hilarious pleasure in our differences, air them here? Why should we enlarge our controversies here? . . . Therefore, I submit, with all the pleading of which I am capable—and I am not capable of much—I do submit with all the earnestness of one who has striven and with some slight success, in his own humble way, to lay the foundations of Hindu-Muslim settlement, along with Mr. Jinnah and his colleagues, I do certainly beg of my Mussalman friends to see that on this matter we all stand together, and I assure them, with all the emphasis at my command, that their cause will not be prejudiced, in the slightest degree . . . " Need we wonder that the words went straight to the hearts of his Muslim hearers?

After thus successfully placating Muslim opinion in the Assembly, Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar turned to the Government members and their supporters: "I do not think myself that I can at all enter into agreements with my friend Col. Crawford. He certainly has not shown that he is a plenipotentiary of the British Cabinet in this country . . . . I find the European Party cannot deliver the goods . . . . Of course I do believe in earning the goodwill of everybody, but there is a time for business also. We have wooed each other for such a length of time by things like good-will, mutual co-operation and other things, and we have found that all this wooing has ended in disaster. What happened? Some had hoped that a gesture at Delhi would have led to very good and pleasant things. But what actually has happened? Mahatma Gandhi

was arrested after that tea party like a common felon in the streets of Calcutta,—for what? For burning foreign cloth, which is a very burnable thing. (Laughter) . . . In the one hand there is the sugar plum and in the other there is repression." And the conclusion was in keeping with the rest of the speech, and produced just the required effect: "If Hindus do not keep faith with the Mussalmans, the Mussalmans will know the reason why. If the Mussalmans do not keep faith with the Hindus, the Hindus will know the reason why. We can adjust our differences ourselves . . . I must request him (Mr. K. Ahmed) as well as others to vote on this motion without the slightest hesitation and defeat this Government." (Loud Applause) It was conceded on all hands that the defeat of the Government by 63 votes against 52 was in great measure due to the persuasive and moving speech by Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar.]

Another noteworthy speech that Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar delivered during this session of the Legislative Assembly was on the point of order on the Public Safety Bill. On the 5th April 1929, the Hon'ble Mr. V. J. Patel, the President, asked the leaders of the various parties to express their views on these two points: "First, whether it is possible to have a real and reasonable debate on the motion that has been made by the Law Member in connection with the Public Safety Bill, in view of the pending prosecution at Meerut. And the second point on which I desire the Honourable Members to express their opinion is the power of the Chair to intervene at this stage." Very good speeches were delivered by Motilal Nehru, Jayakar and Srinivasa Iyengar; the Law Member and the Home Member were the Government spokesmen. Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar followed the Hon'ble Sir B. L. Mitter, the Law Member, and began with a deprecatory reference to his speech: "I have listened with considerable anxiety—I shall not say enlightenment—to the speeches of Sir Darcy Lindsay and of the Honourable the Law Member. I must submit, Sir, that when the latter said he was new to this house, I did feel sympathy for him." Then Mr. Iyengar judiciously remarked that the President, both by virtue of his own experience and of his conversations with the Speakers of the British Parliament and of

the Irish Dail, was more than competent to decide the points at issue by himself. He then turned the tables against Sir Darcy Lindsay, who had insinuated that the President sought to be a dictator, by alleging that he (Lindsay) "acted Mussolini for the time being." Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar himself would look upon this question purely as a lawyer and as a member of the Assembly. Then he elaborated with apt and unexceptionable illustrations the three grounds on which the power of the Chair was based: the principle by way of analogy, the principle by way of implication, and lastly, above all, the inherent nature of the power. "You know that the rules of business are not exhaustive. Supposing there were no rules of business enacted, does it mean that the President cannot lay down the procedure? Therefore the President has got all the rights of a President unless his rights are taken away by express words."

The other point raised by the President was whether a reasonable debate could be maintained on the Public Safety Bill. In answering this question in the affirmative, Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar drew freely upon the resources of sheer argumentation as also of sarcasm and raillery. "Nobody can take advantage of his own wrong—much less the Government. No Government would first of all start a prosecution in order to stifle the freedom of debate in this House, nor take advantage of the provisions of Standing Order 29 and then say, 'Well, we have brought a prosecution there and therefore you, Members of the Opposition, have no right to refer to all those matters which you would otherwise have been at liberty to refer to. We do not propose to refer to them, because we have voting strength at our back.' . . . . Though it may not occur as a matter of fact, still I must proceed on the theory that Honourable Members are persons that may be persuaded to one's point of view." Then Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar compared the points at issue in the Meerut Conspiracy Case with the possible grounds for the introduction of the Public Safety Bill, and concluded: "Now, the material facts at issue are in substance the same both in the Meerut case and as to the present Bill. There is alleged to be a communist conspiracy to overthrow the government established by law in British

India by force of violence . . . That is the only question which we need consider. That is a fact which is pending adjudication in the Meerut Court and that is the fact which it is necessary for the Government to establish in order to have this Bill passed . . . . The Chair is the representative of the House, the dignity of the House is in its keeping, the traditions and the rules of the House are likewise in its keeping . . . The Chair is the mouth or organ of the House . . . It has claimed this power not for itself but as a representative of the House . . . . For these reasons I submit that . . . you have the right and are bound to exercise the right to say that the Government cannot proceed with the consideration of the Bill." The wording of the Hon'ble the President's ruling showed how much he had been influenced by Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar's able presentation of the issues involved. Mr. Iyengar also raised a point of order about the Trades Disputes Bill, but the President was not persuaded by the "ingenious arguments advanced by the honourable member representing the Madras City."

We have already referred to the Meerut Trial. A defence committee was formed at the time, and help of all kinds was canvassed. A member of the committee (Mr. Nariman) had approached Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar to request him if he would undertake to defend the Meerut prisoners, and he had tentatively agreed; and this news appeared in some papers. When Pandit Jawaharlal was asked about this, he said that he had not yet received any offers from Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar to conduct the defence. When presiding over a session of the Tamil Nadu Congress Committee, a member asked Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar if he was going to defend the Meerut prisoners. He answered that he had had that idea once, but owing to the attitude of Pandit Jawaharlal he had decided not to do so. This thoroughly blameless speech was mis-reported in a vernacular paper and was further mis-translated into English in some North Indian paper. On the strength of the report, Pandit Jawaharlal wrote a discourteous letter to Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar. The latter, in his restrained and dignified reply, explained the facts and contended that no lawyer could offer his services voluntarily; and it was sheer insolence to suppose that he (Mr. Iyengar)

should have offered his services to Pandit Jawaharlal. The correspondence clearly enough showed how impulsive the Pandit had been. Incidents like these—and there were a good many like this, only lesser names were involved—had happened in Madras as well, and not unnaturally Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar was getting disillusioned. The iron of determined renunciation was perhaps already making inroads into his heart. He questioned things, and may be he was in doubt.

Towards the end of the year 1929, events were moving with rapidity. Lord Irwin had proceeded to England about the middle of the year "to represent to His Majesty's Government the different standpoints of those who can speak for Indian political opinion." In England he had consultations with the new Premier, Mr. Ramsay MacDonald, and the new Secretary of State, Mr. Wedgewood Benn. As a result of these conversations, Lord Irwin made a statement, on his return to India, on the 31st October. Briefly, the statement reiterated that "it is the desire of the British Government that India should, in the fullness of time, take her place in the Empire in equal partnership with the Dominions"; it further hinted at "the setting up of a Conference in which His Majesty's Government should meet representatives both of British India and of the States, for the purpose of seeking the greatest possible measure of agreement for the final proposals which it would be later the duty of His Majesty's Government to submit to Parliament." Here was the Round Table Conference for which people had been clamouring for! Within twenty-four hours, leading Indian politicians were examining this statement in Delhi. Members of the Congress Working Committee, along with other leaders, put their heads together and finally issued a remarkable statement expressing their appreciation of the sincerity underlying the Viceroy's declaration and their hope "to be able to tender our co-operation to His Majesty's Government in their effort to evolve a scheme of Dominion Constitution suitable to India's needs." The signatories to the Manifesto further considered it "vital for the success of the proposed Conference" that a better atmosphere should be induced in the country so that "the public should be made to feel that a new era has commenced even from today,

and that the new Constitution is to be but a register of that fact". "We understand, however," they judiciously observed, "that the Conference is to meet not to discuss when Dominion Status is to be established, but to frame a scheme of Dominion Constitution for India." What an idea! What an ingenuous interpretation of the Viceroy's declaration! However, Dr. Kitchlew and Subhas Chandra Bose dissented from the Delhi Leaders' statement. Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar was not present in Delhi at all.

A few days later a debate took place in the House of Lords in which Lords Parmoor and Passfield clarified the policy of the Government towards India. Immediately after, Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar issued a statement to the press, deprecating the Delhi Leaders' manifesto and explaining the true significance of the Lords' debate: "The bubble so elaborately raised by ourselves has been neatly pricked by Lords Parmoor and Passfield ...... We must not surrender to an empty phrase but we must see what is the business behind the Viceroy's announcement." Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar then criticized the members of the Working Committee for signing the manifesto without consulting the A.-I. C. C. He then attempted a bit of prophecy that we know to-day has been literally fulfilled: "I feel certain that the Round Table Conference, consisting of representatives of parties and interests, and of the Indian States, will agree, some readily, others reluctantly, but all with equal efficacy, to a constitution falling substantially short of Dominion Status, containing material reservations and exceptions, vital qualifications and capital delays, and postponements introducing a considerable time factor." The last sentences were more general, but each word rang sincere and true: "In fundamentals, honest and courageous difference is better than the desire to be always in the picture and not to be left out of the crowd under the excuse that unity in things good, bad and indifferent is invariably right and just. We should not glory in being inferior to the Chinese or Japanese or Persians or Turks or to the Black Republic of San Domingo who are all independent peoples, and do not hanker after being a British Dominion, deeming that status to be Super-Independence. *Facili dissensus Averni.*"

Presently, there was another debate, this in the House of Commons. Baldwin, MacDonald, Simon, Benn, Lloyd George, all made speeches. The official speeches made it clear that while His Majesty's Government were not averse to the Viceroy's declaration being misunderstood in India as an offer of immediate Dominion Status, they were anxious to assure the British people that no such thing was contemplated at all. This duplicity made even Pandit Motilal fulminate against the British. Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar embodied his views in another outspoken statement to the press on the 11th November: "It is absolutely essential that the public and the political parties generally, and in particular congressmen, should get rid of their self-deception in connection with the Viceroy's announcement... The cat is out of the bag. It is not a Round Table Conference at all. It is merely the old story of the Indians going on a deputation to England just as they did at the time of the Montagu Act, and to say whatever they have to say to Mr. Ramsay MacDonald or to Mr. Benn. The Government simply asks for the opinion of certain representatives before they make up their mind." After reminding independence-wallahs of Mr. Benn's taunt that the Viceroy's declaration has smashed the independence movement, Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar wisely observed: "The duty of the Congress is to pull up the other parties to its level and not lower the standard under the excuse of the greatest measure of agreement with other parties, and to pull itself and others down."

The hesitant tactics of some of the members of the Working Committee led presently to the resignation by Messrs. Srinivasa Iyengar, Subhas Chandra Bose and Jawaharlal Nehru of their membership of the Committee. But the wobbling continued unabated. Mahatma Gandhi released for publication further characteristic conundrums. "I can wait for Dominion Status if I can get real Dominion Status in action i. e., if the British wish to see India self-respecting. This means the substitution of the steel bayonet by the good-will of the people." The very next day Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar issued yet another statement to the press, appealing to Congressmen not to lower the flag of Independence unfurled at Madras: "Is it to attend this camou-

flage of a Conference as described by Mr. Benn, without any guarantee that it is for the framing of Dominion Constitution, or is it to get our National Demand accepted and to establish Swaraj ourselves that all the sacrifice and the building up of manhood during all these years were undertaken? . . . Real and effective unity is an active chemical compound and not an unstable, ineffective mixture of wholly divergent groups, views and methods." He then sharply distinguished between political puritanism and political profligacy: "Sternness, self-reliance, national pride, insistence upon plain business settlements and standing by one's deliberate word and neither deceiving ourselves nor deceiving others, nor allowing anyone to deceive us, these are the firm foundations of a sound public opinion and conduct indispensable to our public life even more than to our private lives. Is this political puritanism? If it is, does any one suggest that political profligacy should shape our public opinion and conduct our public life? . . . Shall we revert to the long exploded moderate policy of petitioning Government and building up of cases to persuade them, or shall we adhere to our own policy of self-reliance which alone has given us a little courage and a little self-respect?" A heavy landslide was threatening; it was the Congressmen's duty to intervene firmly and stop the rot.

The change of atmosphere—amnesty to political prisoners and so on—had not been brought about. It was found expedient to hold another meeting of the Delhi leaders at Allahabad. On the 16th November this All-Parties Gathering met simultaneously with the Congress Working Committee. Again, the pious wish, Delhi brand, was re-echoed, and developments were awaited. Perhaps, a personal talk with the Viceroy would clear up all misunderstandings . . . Perhaps! Indeed, such a meeting was within the realm of possibility. On the 23rd November, Gandhi, Motilal Nehru, Jinnah, Sapru and the Hon'ble V. J. Patel met Lord Irwin. Gandhiji wanted further light on the Declaration. Was Dominion Status promised immediately, or was it not? His Excellency could only point to the Declaration. No further commitments could be made. Gandhi and Nehru returned disappointed. The curtain rose over the Lahore session of

the Indian National Congress. Pandit Jawaharlal, the President, addressed his 'Comrades' with vigour and ended in true Marxist style, 'Long Live the Revolution!' Fury with British imperialism and impatience with the nationalistic inertia in India: these were the intertwining themes of the address. The cold weather in Lahore was of a piece with the bleakness of the prospects before the country. One hundred minor details were agitating the minds of the delegates. But the unuttered question was, how to daunt and defeat the illimitable reserves of the bureaucratic machinery? Boycott of the legislatures again—and then? Declaration of independence only as the goal of the Congress—and then? There were endless confabulations and interminable jugglings with words and pathetic pursuits after satisfactory formulas. At length the official resolution emerged: "This Congress endorses the action of the Working Committee in connection with the Manifesto signed by party leaders, including congressmen, on the Viceregal pronouncement of the 31st October relating to Dominion Status, and appreciates the efforts of the Viceroy towards a settlement of the national movement for Swaraj. The Congress, however, having considered all that has since happened and the result of the meeting between Mahatma Gandhi, Pandit Motilal Nehru and other leaders and the Viceroy, is of opinion that nothing is to be gained in the existing circumstances by the Congress being represented at the proposed Round Table Conference. This Congress, therefore, in pursuance of the resolution passed at its session in Calcutta last year, declares that the word 'Swaraj' in Art. I of the Congress Constitution shall mean Complete Independence, and further declares the entire scheme of the Nehru Committee's Report to have lapsed, and hopes that all Congressmen will henceforth devote their exclusive attention to the attainment of Complete Independence for India." The Resolution further proclaimed a boycott of the legislatures and authorized the A.-I. C. C. "whenever it deems fit, to launch upon a programme of Civil Disobedience includiug non-payment of taxes, whether in selected areas or otherwise." Mahatma Gandhi also wanted to pass a number of resolutions radically changing the constitution of the Congress. Mr. Srinivasa

Iyenger, Mr. Subhas Chandra Bose and their followers scented in these changes a desire on the part of Gandhi, his *chelas* and the Nehrus to make the Congress a compact but undemocratic organization, where the Opposition will be made unceremoniously to knuckle under. Gandhi was unable to take the Congress with him, and the Opposition won. But in another matter he had his way. So far it had been the practice in the Congress for the A.-I. C. C. to elect the office bearers as well as the members of the Working Committee; and generally the different sections had found due representation in the Congress Executive. This time Gandhi and the Nehrus decided to exclude the Iyengar-Bose Opposition, and insisted that the selection of the Working Committee was the sole responsibility of the President. The selection was actually made by Gandhi, Motilal Nehru and Jamnalal Bajaj but was approved by the younger Nehru. Srinivasa Iyengar and Subhas Chandra Bose wanted that the principle of election should be continued, but the proposal was turned down; hence they staged a walk-out, followed by several others. Promptly they formed another Party, the Congress Democratic Party, with Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar as President and Mr. Subhas Bose as Secretary, and the latter sent a telegram to Mrs. C. R. Das: "Circumstances and tyranny of majority forced us to form separate party, as at Gaya, named Congress Democratic Party. Pray spirit of Desabandhu may guide us and your blessings may inspire us." It was announced that "the new Party will, without prejudice to the Party's objective of Complete Independence for India, endeavour to the best of its ability to co-operate as far as possible with the other Parties in the country in such programmes, policies and activities as the Party may accept for the purpose of attaining its objective." As soon as Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar returned to Madras, he resigned his seat in the Legislative Assembly; and so did most of the congressmen, though some successfully contested the elections again. Anyhow, nine years after Calcutta and Nagpur, Mahatma Gandhi had reassumed the leadership of the Congress.

On the contrary, Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar decided to retire from the Congress. He resigned his Presidentship of the

Tamil Nadu Congress Committee, and though the members repeatedly requested him to reconsider the decision, he was adamant. He was disillusioned, he said; most people in Madras had looked upon him as a glorified election agent; and his health had been seriously impaired and he must really take some rest; and finally, if ever he should decide to return to the Congress, his friend, Mr. Muthuranga Mudaliar, the new President, would always be willing to vacate the seat. So he took his leave of the Tamil Nadu Congress Committee and went to Basavangudi to recoup his health. Subhas Chandra Bose was arrested in Calcutta, and sentenced to a year's imprisonment. The 26th January was observed throughout India as the independence or Purna Swarajya Day and a resolution prepared by the Working Committee was adopted by innumerable meetings all over the country. The resolution affirmed its faith in Independence, recapitulated the four-fold—economical, political, cultural and spiritual—ruination of India under the British Raj, and held "it to be a crime against man and God to submit any longer to a rule that has caused this four-fold disaster to our country". Independent India, people were fain to believe, had been inaugurated at last, in the best of all places, the people's hearts. The situation was suggestive of infinite possibilities.

Lord Irwin's speech before the Delhi Assembly was a clarification of his earlier Declaration. The direction—towards Dominion Status—had been specified; as for the date when the destination might be reached, it would depend on several factors, and it was dangerous to talk about it. Gandhiji "thanked" the Viceroy "for having cleared the atmosphere and let us know exactly where he and we stand." Then he requested the Viceroy to effect the following eleven reforms: total prohibition; reduction of the ratio to 1s. 4d.; reduction of the land revenue by at least 50%; abolition of the salt tax; reduction of military expenditure by 50%, to begin with; reduction of salaries of the highest grade services by half or less to suit the reduced revenue; protective tariff on foreign cloth; passage of Coastal Traffic Reservation Bill; discharge of all political prisoners and abrogation of Section 124-A; abolition of the C. I. D. or its

popular control; issue of fire-arms for self-defence. "Let the Viceroy satisfy us with regard to these very simple but vital needs of India. He will then hear no talk of Civil Disobedience; and the Congress will heartily participate in any Conference where there is perfect freedom of expression and demand." The eleven points—"simple and vital needs"—could scarcely be translated into action even by a purely Swaraj Government except in the course of a decade or two. Witness what the Hon'ble Mr. Rajagopalachari, who if any may be said to have Gandhiji's conscience in his pocket, is saying since he reluctantly assumed the Premiership in Madras. Enunciation of policies—enumeration of "very simple but vital needs" of India—these are easy enough, fatally so. But the putting of them into practice is alas! a different matter altogether.

Be that as it may, Gandhiji's points on the one hand were hopelessly impracticable and on the other hand were by no means a valid substitution for complete independence. Gandhiji further desired that the Conference should give "perfect freedom of expression and demand." How far does this take us? Of course, it was open to a delegate even to "demand" that henceforth England should be under the control of India; the only question is whether one's demands were going to be met or not. With Gandhiji playing such a delectable gala-dance with hypothetical propositions and wobblings about "the substance of independence", with the Working Committee deciding about this time that the Civil Disobedience Movement "should be initiated and controlled by those who believe in non-violence . . . as an article of faith" and authorizing Gandhi "to start Civil Disobedience" as and when and in the manner and to the extent he may decide, Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar came to the logical conclusion that, in fairness to the majority party in the Congress, he should give them a free and unfettered hand to wage the war of independence in their own way, and not embarrass them in any manner whatsoever. His chief lieutenant, Subhas Chandra Bose, was already in jail and hence out of the picture. Formally therefore, Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar decided to retire from active policies till Mahatmaji had brought his projected campaign to a conclusion.

Perhaps, for some months previously, Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar was feeling a little out of place in the Congress organization. The Congress had increasingly come to lean on the ascetic leadership of Mahatma Gandhi. His vague intuitions, his mystic incantations, his unconscious jugglery with words, these and these alone formed the ground-work of Congress policy. An intellectual who liked things to be uttered with logical precision and lucid clarity, a patriot who had a clear realization of the limitations of practical politics, —to such a man the perturbing mysticism of Gandhi's leadership and its hypnotic hold on the masses of the nation cannot but appear to be an undesirable, if also under the circumstances an unescapable, state of affairs. Gandhiji firmly believed and preached and even put into practice the theory that all the political and economic problems that face us involve distinct moral issues. 'Moral', 'soul', 'sin', 'purity', 'conscience'—these are terms that many politicians find it necessary to use to colour their propagandist utterances. But to Gandhi they are integral with his political and economic programme. To wear foreign cloth is sinful; to study English is sinful; to drink is sinful; secrecy is sinful; . . . and so on. Unfortunately, political questions rarely, very rarely, present clear-cut moral issues, so that you can never say that this is morally right and this other morally wrong. The question ever is whether this is more expedient than the other, or *vice versa*. But politicians like Mahatma Gandhi who honestly believe, and who have the power to make others believe, that a moral issue is really involved, can acquire a tremendous following with an intensely religious people like the Indians (Hindus and Muslims equally). To those who would treat political questions on their merits—while yet being personally religious—and in terms of feasibility and expediency, the ascetic method of Gandhiji's, however valid in his own extraordinary case, would savour of mere cant when handled by lesser men. Truth and non-violence are in the abstract very good things. But what is Truth—so may even a present-day Pilate jestingly ask, and turn away without waiting for an answer. And thus about non-violence also. Ideals, however desirable and above suspicion in the abstract, become of the earth earthy when translated into

practice. Mahatma Gandhi's campaigns have given India, directly or indirectly, a colossal legacy of suffering. This monster of federation that has been thrust upon India—with its, in my friend Mr. Chalapati Rau's felicitous language, "mob of Princes and motley of Provinces, with safeguards at the centre and self-government at the circumference"—would have been none the worse had we been spared all this Gandhian orgy of nation-wide suffering. Had the Madras Congress resolution on Hindu-Muslim Unity been earlier adopted, India had at least been spared the scandal of the Premier's Communal Award. In conclusion, we are where we were; and congressmen are in the Councils; and wrecking the Constitution is in the air, while working it is on the terra firma.

But the Gandhian programme alone has been religious enough for the masses and spectacular enough for the leaders, and consequently it alone has dominated the political scene for nearly twenty years. In jail or out of it, in the thick of it or only on the fringe of it, Congress president or not even a four-anna member of the Congress—always Gandhiji alone has had a hearing. As Dr. Pattabi writes about the Gandhi-ites (the reference is to the Gaya Congress): "That the leader . . . was not present in flesh and blood made no difference. His ideals of truth and non-violence, his philosophy of suffering and sacrifice, his religion of politics based on the Sermon on the Mount and the Beatitudes,—all these were there imperfectly lisped by his followers, but perfectly shining forth from the aureole that surrounded his benign portrait." It was true; and it is true; and the intolerance of the Gandhi-ites is such that there is no room in Indian politics for either Right leaders like the Sastris and Saprus or Left leaders like the Srinivasa Iyengars and Subhas Chandra Boses. Perhaps, Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar knew how Indian politics would shape itself during the next few years. He had fought for a more clear-headed, and a more practical policy; and he had failed. He firmly and bravely removed himself from the picture.

It is needless to recapitulate here the events in India since Gandhiji's historic march to the salt-pans at Dandi. Production of contra-band salt became the chief instrument

of our salvation. As Pandit Jawaharlal notes in his Autobiography: "We knew precious little about it, and so we read it up where we could and issued leaflets giving directions and collected pots and pans and ultimately succeeded in producing some unwholesome stuff, which we waved about in triumph and often auctioned for fancy prices." Lord Irwin hesitated, and hesitantly acted. And Dr. Sapru and Mr. Jayakar got busy. Peace nagotiations were carried on, and the admirable Castor and Pollux played the part of post-men carrying weighty letters to and fro. The first Round Table Conference took place in London, and the delegates returned. On the suggestion of Pandit Motilal, Sir Tej Bahadur again tried to bring Gandhiji and Lord Irwin together, and effect a settlement. The now famous Gandhi-Irwin settlement emerged from behind the closed door of the Viceregal Palace. Gandhi went to England as the sole representative of the Congress to the second Round Table Conference. He returned, sought an interview with the new Viceroy, Lord Willingdon, was refused the interview, started Civil Disobedience again, and within a month, water-hose and lathi more or less scotched the movement. As a protest against separate electorates for the Depressed Classes, Gandhi declared a "fast unto death". The Poona Pact emerged, in which the leaders of the Depressed Classes agreed to joint electorates with reservation of seats. Gandhiji declared another fast for twenty-one days, was released from prison unconditionally, successfully carried out his fast, and has since been officially devoting himself to the cause of the Harijans and to the development of rural industries in India. When Bidhan Chandra Roy and Bhulabhai Desai wished to give a new orientation to the Congress Policy, Gandhiji declared that the "parliamentary mentality has come to stay". The Congress Parliamentary Board was formed under the Presidency of Dr. Ansari, and later of Mr. Vallabhbhai Patel. The Congress contested the elections to the Indian Legislative Assembly, and later to the Provincial Legislatures under the Hoare Act of 1935. Gandhiji gave a last twist to the Parliamentary Programme by asking the Congress to demand an "assurance" from the Governors that they will not resort to the discretionary

powers vested in them by the Act. The "assurance" was not forthcoming; and with Gandhiji's blessing, and continued benedictions, the Congress is running the Government of most of the provinces in India.

As for Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar, he has been resolutely silent all these years since the Lahore Congress. He studiously kept out of the first Civil Disobedience movement of 1930. His daughter, Mrs. Ambujammal, picketed foreign cloth shops, was arrested, but was not convicted. In the second movement, started early in 1932, Mrs. Ambujammal again took part in picketing and was sentenced for a term of imprisonment. When Mahatma Gandhi paid a visit to Madras in 1934, he saw Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar at his residence and was closetted with him for an hour. People have had interesting and amusing speculations about the details of that unique conversation. *Ananda Vikatan* published one such—a simple exercise of fancy.

As for Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar's immediate followers, they kept aloof from the Salt Satyagraha movement for a time. Then they joined the picketing movement and were incarcerated. In the 1932 movement, they were active from the beginning. They were very active indeed in popularizing the Parliamentary Programme, and luckily they had acquired a pronounced supporter of the cause in Mr. Rajagopalachari, once the Messiah of the no-changers. Mr. Satyamurti was returned to the Delhi Assembly by the city of Madras. At this juncture, Mr. Rajagopalachari retired from the Presidentship of the Tamil Nadu Congress Committee, making way for Mr. Satyamurti. Within a year there were dissensions in the Tamil Nadu Congress Camp. An abortive attempt was made to request Mr. S. Srinivasa Iyengar to come out of his retirement and assume the leadership of the Congress. When Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar would not accept the responsibility on any account, the anti-Satyamurti-ites put up Mr. Muthuranga Mudaliar as a candidate for the Presidency. The attempt did not succeed. Mr. Satyamurti was re-elected. For the time being all was well.

Meanwhile, Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar was able to resign himself to his ancient love, Law, and perhaps to letters as well, may be to the Tiruvoimozhi. He was elected as the

President of the Madras Bar Association. But politicians would not leave him alone. Rajagopalachari was apparently out of the Congress—what with his Classical studies and his differences with Dr. T. S. S. Rajan. Who else was competent enough to steer the Congress ship across the troubled waters of the Parliamentary programme before it? Had not Mr. Rajagopalachari himself said in 1929—when Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar wished to retire from the Congress—that none but Srinivasa Iyengar could be in charge of Congress affairs in Madras? Requests were made and petitions were apparently sent to Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar. At last, Mr. K. Bashyam gave a party to Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar and many of the Madras Congress leaders were present on the occasion. Mr. Bashyam and others explained the complexities of the political situation and suggested that Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar should kindly agree to lead the Congress again. He gave, it seems, a patient hearing to all that was said, but gave little hope of his being able to bear the heavy burdens they wished to impose upon him.

Once, however, Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar did nobly participate in a public function,—an appropriate and significant function as well. It was the occasion of the celebration of the Golden Jubilee of Mr. C. Vijiaraghavachari's entry into public life, which fortunately coincided with the Golden Jubilee of the Indian National Congress itself. A public meeting was held on the 27th December, 1935, at the Victoria Public Hall. The hall was packed to the full, and leaders of different political parties were present. Presiding over that memorable gathering, Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar made an equally memorable speech: "I am certainly proud to be associated with the function as a life-long admirer of his. I think his life is valuable to us for the salient lessons which it teaches." The qualities identified with Mr. Vijiaraghavachari are, said Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar, "his sterling honesty of purpose, fearless independence of character and independence of thought and a sleepless vigilance over the rights and duties of his countrymen." He then continued: "Politics and public life are very difficult things. Sir Samuel Hoare made his reputation in September at Geneva and lost it early in December at Paris. Therefore you will realize that

what is necessary and what is fundamental is honesty in public life . . . When parties come into existence, independence of judgement goes. But still independent judgement is valuable, if not in public, at least in the private counsels of a Party. But independence of character is even more valuable, and that you find in him in full measure."

Then Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar explained how difficult it was over fifty years ago to engage in public service: "It was in those days all a jungle. The bureaucrat was enthroned in the high seat and conditions were quite different and patriotism was only a word in the dictionary. In those days, real leadership was difficult of achievement; in those days, to have fought and emerged into public life, to have been a path-finder through track-less jungles, with pit-falls and dangers and wild beasts, is certainly a thing of which any man may be proud and of which we ought to be proud. In these days with tarred roads it is easier; when parties and organizations exist, it is not so difficult. But to realize conditions in those days, you must go back in your imagination to the story of a man who unaided, out of his inner convictions, came out and did what he could, in the face of much misunderstanding and unpopularity and against his own interests and various other inconveniences to which he was put in, shouldered the burden which he voluntarily took up."

Then, a little more in a personal vein, Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar said: "Speaking of him and of my late friend, Sir Sankaran Nair, I may say that I owe to them what little patriotism I have. To these remarkable men I owe what ought to be the really abiding trait of an Indian—racial self-respect . . . That racial self-respect and patriotism, if properly implemented, will lead to racial consolidation throughout the length and breadth of India." And in conclusion, Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar said: "I will only say that he has followed a rule of life, which I think, is a just one, as most of us, at any rate the old men, will agree . . . he has acted on the principle: 'Neither love your life nor hate it: but what thou livest, live well.' I will also pay him this negative tribute,—I consider it a high and valuable one, although it be negative—he has not tampered with weights and measures." After the Address on behalf

of the citizens of South India had been read by Mr. Muthuranga Mudaliar, and speeches made by Dr. Subbarayan, Mr. Hameed Khan and Mr. C. Rajagopalachari, Mr. Vijiaraghavachari replied suitably to the speeches that had been made felicitating him on the completion of fifty years of public life. Mr. V. V. Srinivasa Iyengar, an ex-Judge of the Madras High Court, proposed a hearty vote of thanks to the Chairman: "The Chairman of the function (Mr. S. Srinivasa Iyengar) is a distinguished countryman. It seems that his chairmanship is auspicious. (Hear, hear!) Even the hermit has been called from his cell, and he comes to take his proper place. When he entered the hall, if he had had any doubts, those doubts would have been swept away by the rousing reception he received from the audience. I have therefore great pleasure on my own behalf and on behalf of the audience in proposing a hearty vote of thanks to Mr. S. Srinivasa Iyengar and to welcome him back to public life in this country."

That was two years ago. But Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar has chosen once again to return to his "cell". As the honoured President of the Madras Bar Association, he makes his appearance before the public occasionally, very occasionally. For the rest, he has not so far cared to entangle himself in current politics. May be he will live a political recluse, merely watching the political scene and its dust and din from the vantage ground of sublime aloofness. Or—who knows? Did not Mr. Vijiaraghavachariar assume the direction of the Congress when he was nearly seventy years old? Did he not preside over the Hindu Maha Sabha at the age of eighty? Another unpremeditated jerk of the political kaleidoscope, and a relentless destiny may form other and more interesting patterns for achieving our goal. It is not unlikely that Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar may yet enter the political fray and discomfit the present political weathercocks. But in it or out of it, what he has already been, and what he has already achieved, will ever remain carved in the memory of his countrymen and will entitle him to their gratitude and affection.

November, 1937.